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Vide Spectator, Vol. II. N. 116.

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THE

PREFACE,

Giving an Account of the Manner in which these Thoughts were written, and were collected; of the Causes that retarded the Impression; of the Author's Design in this Work; and how he spent the latter part of his Life.

MONSIEUR *Pascal* having taken an early Leave of the Mathematicks, of Natural Philosophy, and of other Humane Studies, in which he had made so great a Progress, that there are, undoubtedly, but very few Persons who have seen deeper into those

Subjects which he chose to handle, began about the Thirtieth Year of his Age, to apply himself to things of a more serious and more elevated Character, and to turn his whole Thoughts, so far as his Health would permit, on the Scriptures, the Fathers, and the Discourses of Practical Christianity.

BUT tho' his Excellence in these latter Studies, no less than in the former, has been already testified by such Works as are acknowledg'd to be exact and accomplish'd in their kind, yet we may affirm, that if it had pleas'd GOD to have granted him a longer Space for the carrying on his general Design, of the Truth of Religion, in which he had resolv'd to imploy the Residue of his Life, this Performance would have been far superior to any that we have receiv'd from the same Hand; because his Views in this respect, infinitely exceeded those which he had attain'd of all things beside.

I believe this is no more than what any one will readily admit, upon the Sight of these few Papers, with all their Imperfections; especially when he shall be made acquainted with the Methods by which the Author prosecuted his Undertaking, and with the entire History of our drawing out this Specimen, for the use of the Publick; of all which take the following Account.

M. *Pas-*

M. *Paſcal* had laid the Scheme of this Work, many Years before his Death; and yet we ought not to wonder that he began ſo late to commit any part of it to Writing; for he had always accuſtom'd himſelf to think very maturely of things, and to range and diſpoſe them in his Mind, e'er he ſuffered them to venture farther, carefully weighing and examining which ought to be placed firſt, and which laſt, and what Order of the whole might ſeem moſt conducible to the deſired Effect. And then being Maſter of an excellent, or, as we may truly ſay, a prodigious Memory, ſo as to have often declared that he never forgot any thing which he had once imprinted in it; he was under no Apprehenſion of letting thoſe Thoughts, which he had at any time form'd, afterwards eſcape him; ſo that it was uſual with him to tarry very long before he ſet them down in Paper; either for want of Leiſure, or becauſe the State of his Health, which was ſcarce ever better than craſy and uncertain, could not ſupport a more laborious Application.

THIS was the Reaſon that, at his Death, we loſt the greateſt part of what he had conceiv'd in purſuance of his Deſign. For there was ſcarce any thing left in writing, either as to the principal Arguments which he propoſed to inſiſt on, or as to the Grounds

and Foundations of the whole Work, or as to the Method and Diſpoſition; which could not but be very conſiderable. All theſe were ſo habitually fixt in his Mind, that having neglected to write them while, perhaps, he was able, he at length found himſelf incapable of going thro' with the Task, when he would gladly have enter'd upon it.

YET there once happen'd an Occaſion, ſome ten or twelve Years ſince, that obliged him, not indeed to write, but to deliver himſelf in Converſation, on this Subject; which he did in the Preſence, and at the Requeſt of many great Perſons, his Friends. To this Company he open'd in few Words the Plan of his whole Undertaking; he repreſented the Subject-matter; he gave an Abſtract of the Reaſons and Principles; and pointed out the intended Order and Sequel of Things. And theſe Gentlemen, who are indiſputably qualified to be Judges in the Caſe, do aver, that they never heard any thing which diſcover'd more Beauty, or more Strength, which was fitter to move, or to convince: They declare themſelves to have been charm'd with the Diſcourſe, and ſay, that the Idea which they were able to form of the main Deſign from a Narrative of two or three Hours, deliver'd thus off hand, and without being labour'd or premeditated, gave them the Pleaſure

Pleaſure of conſidering with themſelves, what the Work might one Day prove, if fully executed and carry'd to its laſt Perfection, by an Author, whoſe Force and Capacity they had ſo often experienc'd; one who had uſed himſelf to be ſo indefatigably laborious in all his Compoſitions; who was ſcarce ever ſatisfied with his firſt Thoughts, how happy ſoever they might ſeem to others; and who had been known on many Occaſions to new-model, no leſs than eight or ten times, ſuch Pieces, as any Perſon but himſelf, muſt have pronounced admirable after a ſingle Trial.

HAVING firſt obſerv'd to them what ſort of Proofs thoſe are which make the greateſt Impreſſion upon Mens Minds, and what are the moſt proper Means of Perſuaſion, he applied himſelf to demonſtrate, that the Chriſtian Religion had no fewer Marks of Certainty and Evidence, than any thing which is receiv'd in the World, for the moſt undoubted Truth.

HE began the Deſign with giving the Picture of a Man, under which he omitted nothing that might diſtinguiſh or illuſtrate him, either without or within, to the moſt ſecret Motions of his Heart. In the next place he ſuppoſed a Perſon who had lived hitherto under a general Ignorance, and utterly indifferent with regard to all

things, to himſelf eſpecially, to come and view himſelf in this Picture, and by it to examine what he is. The Perſon cannot but be ſurprized to diſcover here an infinite Variety of things, which never yet enter'd into his Thought; nor can without Aſtoniſhment and Admiration reflect on what he now learns and feels of his Dignity and his Baſeneſs, of his Advantages and his Infirmities, of the ſmall glimmering of Light which remains within him, and of the miſerable Darkneſs with which he is, almoſt on all ſides, encompaſs'd; in a word, of all the prodigious Contrarieties which appear in his Nature. After this 'tis impoſſible he ſhould continue his Indifference, if he has but the leaſt Spark of Reaſon; and how inſenſible ſoever he has hitherto been, he muſt now of neceſſity deſire, when he once knows what he is, to be inform'd likewiſe whence he derives his Original, and what Fate abides him hereafter.

Having brought his Man to this good Diſpoſition, of ſeeking to be inſtructed in ſo important a Doubt, he ſends him firſt to the Philoſophers, and having rehears'd to him the Sum of what their greateſt Profeſſors have deliver'd on the Subject of Humane Nature and Condition, he makes him diſcover ſo many Failures and Weakneſſes, ſo many Falſities and Contradictions in all that they

they advance, as to judge very eaſily that theſe are not the Men who muſt give him Satisfaction.

AT the next Remove, he leads him the whole Circuit of all Nations and all Ages, ſo as to give him a View of the almoſt endleſs Variety of Religions in the World, but at the ſame time lets him underſtand by the ſtrongeſt and moſt convictive Proofs that all theſe Religions are ſo full of Vanity and Folly, of Error and Extravagance, as to afford nothing in which his Mind may acquieſce and repoſe it ſelf.

AT length he bids him fix his Eye on the People of the Jews, where the Circumſtances he is preſented with, are ſo extraordinary, as to engage and imploy his whole Attention. Having let him into all that was ſingular in this Nation, he ſtops him to take particular Notice of one Book, by which they entirely govern themſelves, and which contains the Sum of their Religion, their Hiſtory, and their Law. Upon the firſt opening of this Book, he is inform'd, that the World is the Work of GOD, and that it was the ſame GOD who created Man in his own Image, and endow'd him with all Advantages of Mind and Body, ſuitable to ſo high an Eſtate. This Truth, tho' it doth not at preſent convince him, yet fails not to pleaſe him; his bare Reaſon being

ſufficient to diſcover a greater Probability in the ſuppoſing GOD to be the Author of the World, and of Mankind, than in any of thoſe Accounts which Men have framed by their own fond Invention. The only thing which gives him any doubt is, that he obſerves Man according to the Picture he ſo lately view'd, to be very far from poſſeſſing all thoſe Advantages, which muſt need have attended him, when he came out of the Hand of his Maker. But he ſoon gets over this Difficulty; becauſe upon looking a little farther into the ſame Book, he diſcovers, that after Man had been thus created by GOD, in a State of Innocence and Perfection, his very firſt Act was to rebel againſt his Creator, and to imploy all the Gifts he had receiv'd from Him, in oppoſing and offending him.

M. *Paſcal* proceeds to inform his Novice, that this Crime having been in all its Circumſtances, the greateſt that could be committed, receiv'd its Puniſhment, not only in the firſt Man, whom, from his State of Excellency and Happineſs, it plunged at one Stroke into Miſery and Weakneſs, into Blindneſs and Error; but likewiſe in all his Deſcendents, to whom he communicated his Corruption, and will continue to communicate it thro' all Ages.

AND

AND now obliging him to peruſe ſeveral other Parts of the Book which furniſh'd him with this Truth, he makes him obſerve, that there is ſcarce any thing recorded of Man, but what bears a Regard to this his Condition of Infirmity and Diſorder: That 'tis often ſaid, All Fleſh have corrupted themſelves, and that Men are deſcribed as abandoning themſelves to their own Senſes, and as having, from their very Birth, an Inclination and Tendency to Evil. He farther lets him ſee that this primitive Defection is the Source, not only of all thoſe incomprehenſible Contrarieties in Humane Nature, but likewiſe of infinite other Effects in the things without us, of which he could never before trace the Cauſe. In ſhort, he exhibits to him ſuch a Pourtraict of Man in the whole ſeries of this Book, as, by anſwering to the Piece which he firſt beheld, cannot but ſatisfie him of its true and juſt Reſemblance.

HAVING thus brought him acquainted with his real Condition, full of Miſery and Grief, he aſſures him, that by following the Guidance of the ſame Book, he will be led into the Hopes of Comfort and Deliverance. He points out to him the ſeveral Paſſages, where 'tis affirm'd, that the Remedy of all our Evils is in the Hand of GOD; that his Aſſiſtance we ought to have Recourſe

Recourſe to, for obtaining the Strength we want; that He will permit himſelf to be prevail'd upon by our Intreaty; and will even ſend us a Saviour to ſatisfie for our Offences, to repair our Breaches, and to heal our Infirmities.

AFTER many other peculiar Remarks on this Book, he engages him to conſider, that 'tis the only Book in the World which has ſpoken worthily of the ſupreme Being, and has inſpired a juſt Idea of Religion. In order to which having made him conceive ſome of the moſt ſenſible Tokens and Characters of the true Religion, he compares them with thoſe which are here deliver'd; teaching him to reflect with more eſpecial Attention, that this Religion placeth the Perfection of Divine Worſhip in the Love of GOD; a Character altogether ſingular, and ſuch as diſtinguiſheth it viſibly from all others, which are convicted of notorious Falſhood by their want of this eſſential Mark.

THUS far he leads the Man, whom by theſe inſenſible Means he propoſeth to make his Convert, without offering at any Arguments to demonſtrate thoſe Truths which He has taught him to diſcover. But, then, He has fully prepared him to receive them with Delight and Complacency, ſo ſoon as they ſhall be demonſtrated to his Underſtanding;

ſtanding; and even to wiſh with the greateſt Earneſtneſs that they may at length appear to be ſolid and well-grounded; becauſe he finds that they ſupply ſo many Aſſiſtances towards the clearing up of his Doubts, and the inſuring of his Repoſe. This indeed is the very Deſire which every rational Man ought to entertain, upon the View of the ſeveral Particulars which M. *Paſcal* has thus repreſented; and 'twas but juſt for him to think that any Perſon under ſuch a Diſpoſition would yield a ready Aſſent to the Proofs he ſhould afterwards alledge, in confirmation of thoſe important Truths which he had before mention'd, and which are the Foundation of Chriſtian Belief, as the Enforcement of this Belief was the ſole Aim of his Diſcourſe.

To ſpeak a Word or two concerning theſe Proofs. After he had obſerv'd in general that the Points which he now aſſerted were all contain'd in a written Volume, the Authority of which every Man of ſound Judgment muſt own to be unqueſtionable, he inſiſted chiefly on the Writings of *Moſes*, where the ſaid Points are in a particular manner reveal'd; and he made it apparent from many undoubted Circumſtances, that 'twas alike impoſſible, either for *Moſes* to have penn'd a whole Series of Falſities, or for

for the Jewiſh Nation to have ſuffer'd the Cheat, if he had been inclined to act it.

He argued farther from the great and ſurprizing Miracles recorded in this Book of Religion; which as they are the higheſt Evidence, if true, ſo he demonſtrated, that they could not poſſibly be falſe; not only from the Authority of theſe Writings in which they are atteſted, but likewiſe from all the Particulars which accompany them, and which ſet them beyond all Suſpicion and Diſpute.

He proceeded to evince, that the whole Oeconomy of the Ritual Law was purely figurative; that all the Diſpenſations and Promiſes to the Jewiſh State were but the Shadows of good Things, which receiv'd their Accompliſhment from the Appearance of the Meſſias; and that after the Veil was once taken away, they viſibly conſpired, and were conſummated, in the behalf of thoſe who believ'd in JESUS CHRIST at his coming.

THE next Reaſon offer'd by M. *Paſcal* for the Credibility of Religion, was taken from the *Prophecies*; a Subject on which he enlarged more than on any other. As he had been very laborious in this Enquiry, and had obtain'd very particular Views of the reſpective Predictions, ſo he open'd them after

after the moſt intelligible manner, explain'd their Deſign and their Event with a wonderful Facility, and placed them in all their Force and Light.

At length having run thro' the Books of the Old Teſtament, and intermixt, upon Occaſion, many convincing Remarks, admirably ſerviceable to the Foundations of Religion, he enter'd on the Conſideration of the New Teſtament, in order to the compleating the whole Argument by the Truth and Reality of the Goſpel.

HE began with our LORD himſelf, whoſe Character and Commiſſion, tho' it was invincibly atteſted by the Prophecies, and by all the Figures of the Law, which had their perfect Conſummation in Him alone, yet he farther illuſtrated by many Evidences drawn from his Perſon, his Miracles, his Doctrine, and the Circumſtances of his Life.

HENCE he deſcended to the Character of the Apoſtles; and that he might eſtabliſh the Certainty of that Faith, which they ſo reſolutely and ſo univerſally preach'd, having laid it down for a Principle, that they cannot be accuſed of Falſhood, but upon one of theſe two Suppoſitions, either that they were themſelves deceiv'd, or that they were engaged in a Deſign of deceiving Others; he made

made it evident that both theſe Suppoſitions were alike abſurd and impoſſible.

IN fine, he paſs'd by nothing that might confirm the Truth of the Evangelical Hiſtory; inſerting many admirable Reflexions on the Goſpel it ſelf, on the Style and Perſons of the Evangeliſts, on the Apoſtles particularly, and on their Writings; on the aſtoniſhing Number of Miracles; on the Example of the Saints, and on all the Methods which contributed to the final Eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity. And tho' in a ſingle Diſcourſe he wanted time for the full Improvement of ſo vaſt a Subject, which he reſerv'd for his intended Work, yet he offer'd enough to evince, that all this could not be the Contrivance and Atchievement of Men; and that it was God alone who was able thus to guide the Iſſue of ſo many different Occurrences, as to make them all conſpire, in giving an irreſiſtible Teſtimony to that Religion which He Himſelf came to ſettle amongſt Men.

THIS was the Subſtance of M. *Paſcal's* Converſation; which he propoſed only as a Sketch of his great Undertaking; and it was by the Favour of one of the Gentlemen there preſent, that we have ſince obtain'd theſe ſhort Memorials of what he deliver'd at that time.

IN

IN the Fragments here publiſh'd we ſee ſomething of the vaſt Deſign conceiv'd by our Author; yet we ſee but little, and even this little comes to us after ſo imperfect a manner, neither carry'd to its juſt Height, nor digeſted in its proper Order, that it can afford us but a very obſcure Idea of the Perfection which he would have given it, in his finiſh'd Performance.

THE Reader will not think it ſtrange, if in theſe few Relicks which are preſerv'd, the Diſpoſition of the Subjects is not made according to the primitive Method. For there being ſo little found which had any Dependence or Connexion, the Publiſhers thought it utterly uſeleſs to be confined to this intended Series, and therefore were ſatisfied with keeping as near as they could to ſuch an Order as ſeem'd moſt convenient in reſpect of the Fragments themſelves. It is alſo hoped, that there are but few Perſons, who, upon forming a general Notion of M. *Paſcal*'s Deſign, will not ſupply by their own Judgment the Defect of this Diſpoſition; and who, after an attentive Regard to the different Matters here diſplay'd, will not, in ſome meaſure, conceive how they ſtand related, according to the original Idea of the Author.

MIGHT we be ſo happy as to ſee a perfect Tranſcript of the fore-mention'd Diſ-

courſe, in the ſame Order in which it was deliver'd, we ſhould have ſomewhat to comfort us under our Loſs of the greater Work; of which we ſhould by this means enjoy ſome imperfect Model. But it pleas'd GOD to deprive us of both theſe Benefits. For M. *Paſcal* fell ſoon after into a languiſhing Diſtemper, which held him during the four laſt Years of his Life; and which tho' it did not betray it ſelf by many outward Signs, nor oblige him to be a Priſoner to his Bed, or his Chamber, yet very much incommoded him, and, in a manner, render'd him incapable of applying himſelf to Buſineſs of any kind: Inſomuch that the chief Care and Employment of thoſe about him was to hinder him from writing, and even from ſpeaking of any thing which required Intention and Force of Spirit, and to entertain him only with indifferent things, and ſuch as could no way diſorder or fatigue him.

YET it was in theſe four Years of Weakneſs that he framed and penn'd all that he left behind on this Subject, and all that is here made publick. For tho' he waited 'till his Health ſhould be fully re-eſtabliſh'd and confirm'd, to ſet upon the Work in good earneſt, and to commit exactly to writing what he had ſo well digeſted and diſpoſed in his Mind; yet when there occur'd to

to him any Thought, any View, any Idea or even any Turn or Expreſſion, which he ſaw might one Day prove ſerviceable to his Deſign, the Condition he was now under not ſuffering him to attend them ſo cloſely as before his Illneſs, nor to fix them with ſo much Strength and Stedfaſtneſs in his Memory, he choſe to preſerve them by the help of ſome ſhort Notes. In order to this, he took the firſt Remnant of Paper that came to hand, and enter'd what he was then meditating, in a very few Words, and often in but half a Word; for he writ purely for his own uſe, and therefore was content to perform it very ſlightly, and ſo as not to diſcompoſe his Temper, barely ſetting down thoſe Hints which were neceſſary for the recalling to his Mind the Ideas he had once conceiv'd.

THIS was the way in which M. *Paſcal* penn'd his Thoughts. And I believe there is no Man, who from theſe ſlight Beginnings, theſe feeble Eſſays of a ſick Perſon, that writ only for himſelf, and writ thoſe things only which he was afraid might otherwiſe be loſt, and which he never afterwards touched or reviſed, will not make ſome gueſs, what the entire Work muſt have been, had the Author perfectly recover'd, and found Opportunity to give it his laſt Hand: He who had the Art of placing things in ſo goodly an Order, and in ſo fair a

Light; who gave ſo particular, ſo noble, and rais'd a Turn to all that he ſaid; who deſign'd that this Performance ſhould be more labour'd than all his former Pieces; who had reſolv'd to employ in it his whole Strength of Genius, and all the Talents which GOD had given him; and who had many Times declared that it would require Ten Years of ſound Health to bring it to Perfection.

IT being well known that M. *Paſcal* had thus engaged himſelf in the Cauſe of Religion, great Care was uſed at his Death to collect all his Writings on this Subject. They were found all together tied up in ſeveral Bundles, but without Order or Connexion; becauſe, as we before obſerv'd, theſe were but the rude Expreſſions of his Thoughts, which he ſet down in broken Papers as they occaſionally offer'd themſelves. And, then, the whole was ſo imperfect, and ſo very ill written, that it ſeemed no ordinary Labour barely to decipher it.

THE firſt thing that was done, was to get the Papers copied, ſuch as they were at preſent, and with the ſame Confuſion in which they lay. But when this was perform'd, and the Fragments more eaſily peruſed and examin'd in the Copy than in the Author's Manuſcript, they appear'd at firſt View ſo indigeſted, ſo little purſued, and, for

for the moſt part, ſo obſcure, that 'twas very long e'er the Parties concern'd were brought to entertain any Deſign of printing them; tho' frequently urged by Perſons of the greateſt Note, with the moſt preſſing Inſtances and Solicitations; becauſe they well underſtood that they ſhould not anſwer the Expectation, and fill up the Idea which had been long conceiv'd of the Undertaking, by ſending abroad theſe Remains under ſo manifeſt Diſadvantages.

AT length they found themſelves obliged to give way to the Deſire and Impatience which almoſt all the World ſeem'd daily to expreſs. And they were the rather prevail'd upon to give their Conſent, becauſe they hoped that the Readers would have ſo much Juſtice, as to diſtinguiſh between a finiſh'd Performance, and the firſt Lines of a Piece, and to gueſs at the Beauty of the Work, by the rudeſt and moſt imperfect Draught. The Publication thereof was reſolv'd upon; but there being ſeveral ways of executing it, ſome time was again ſpent in conſidering which to take.

THE moſt obvious, and without doubt, the moſt eaſy manner, was to let them be printed in all Reſpects as they were found. But it was ſoon perceiv'd that this would entirely obſtruct all the Uſe and Benefit that might otherwiſe be promis'd from them;

becauſe thoſe Thoughts which ſeem'd to be more finiſh'd and more connected, to be expreſſed with greater Clearneſs and carry'd to a better Head, being intermixt, and almoſt overwhelm'd with ſo many others which were imperfect, obſcure, unwrought, and ſome of them utterly unintelligible to any but the Author, there was good reaſon to apprehend, that the latter would highly prejudice the former, and that this Volume of broken Meditations, which muſt ſwell to ſo great and ſo very unprofitable a Bulk, could be only look'd on as a confuſed Maſs, without Order, Dependence, or Uſe.

THERE was another way of publiſhing theſe Relicks; and that was, to ſpend ſome Labour upon them before they went to the Preſs, in illuſtrating ſuch Reflexions as were obſcure, finiſhing thoſe that were imperfect, and in carrying on the Deſign of the Author, through all the Fragments, ſo as, in a great meaſure, to accompliſh the Work which he had begun. This Method was evidently the moſt perfect, but then it was exceedingly difficult to be purſued. However, the thing ſtop'd here for a Time, and ſome Steps were actually made towards the Performance. Yet it was at laſt reſolv'd to reject this Expedient as well as the former; it being conſider'd, that it was a thing next to impoſſible to fall regularly into the Meaſures of

of an Author, eſpecially of a deceas'd Author; and that this would not be to preſent the World with M. *Paſcal*'s Offspring, but with ſomewhat of a quite different Complexion and Conſtitution.

To avoid the Inconvenience of both theſe Propoſals, a middle way was found, which has been here follow'd by the Publiſhers. They have only ſelected from the whole Number of ſcatter'd Thoughts, ſuch as they judg'd to be the moſt finiſh'd, and moſt intelligible; and theſe they have preſented to the World, without Addition or Alteration; excepting that whereas they lay before confuſedly diſper'd, without Order and Dependence, they are now put into ſome kind of Method, and reduced under common Heads, agreeably to their reſpective Subjects. As for all thoſe which were too imperfect, or obſcure, it was determin'd entirely to ſuppreſs them.

NOT but that there were many admirable Reflexions of this latter kind, and ſuch as might afford very noble Views, if thoroughly apprehended. But as it had been a ſettled Rule, that no Endeavours ſhould be uſed towards illuſtrating and compleating them, ſo in their preſent Condition they muſt have been wholly uſeleſs. I ſhall produce one Example to furniſh the Reader with ſuch an Idea as may aſſiſt him in form-

ing a Judgment of the reſt. The Reflexion, as we found it in the Author's own Words, is as follows: *A Mechanic ſpeaking of Riches; a Solicitor ſpeaking of War; or of Regal State,* &c. *But the Rich diſcourſe well of Riches; a King ſpeaks coldly of a vaſt Preſent which he is about to make; and GOD diſcourſeth well of GOD.*

THIS Fragment contains a moſt excellent Thought; but ſuch as few, perhaps, will be able to penetrate; becauſe it appears ſo intricate, abrupt and conciſe, that if the Author had not frequently deliver'd himſelf to the ſame Purpoſe in Converſation with his Friends, it would have been no eaſy Task to retrieve it from ſo confuſed and perplex'd an Expreſſion. Let us examine it more nearly, and obſerve where the ſecret Beauty is conceal'd.

M. *Paſcal* had made a great Number of very particular Obſervations on the Stile of the Holy Scriptures, of the Goſpel eſpecially; and had diſcern'd many Excellencies which perhaps none ever reach'd before him. Amongſt other things, he was wont to admire the native Simplicity, and, if we may ſo term it, the Coldneſs and Unconcernedneſs with which our LORD ſeem'd to ſpeak of the greateſt and moſt important Subjects; as for inſtance, of the Kingdom of GOD, of the Glory of the Saints in Heaven, and of the

the Pains of Hell; without dilating upon theſe Topics, as the Fathers, and all other Writers are obſerv'd to do. And he ſaid the true Reaſon of this Difference was, that the Particulars before mention'd, tho' infinitely noble and ſublime in reſpect of us, were by no means ſo in reſpect of JESUS CHRIST; and that therefore 'twas natural for him to ſpeak of them without Aſtoniſhment or Admiration; as we hear a General ſpeaking of the Siege of ſome Place of Conſequence, or of his Succeſs in a mighty Battel, without being moved or affected; or, as a King expreſſeth himſelf with Indifference about a Sum of many Thouſands, which a private Perſon, or a Mechanic, could not name without the higheſt Exaggerations.

THIS is the Thought which is really couch'd under thoſe few Words of the Fragments now recited: And this Conſideration added to many of the like Nature, cannot fail of ſupplying rational and ſober Men with an Argument for our LORD's Divinity.

I am perſwaded that this one Inſtance may be ſufficient, not only for a Standard in judging of almoſt all the other Fragments which have been retrench'd, but likewiſe for a Proof of the little Application, and even the Negligence with which the greateſt Part of M. *Paſcal*'s Remains were written.

ten. And as this will juſtifie what was before aſſerted, that the Author writ them, in effect, for none but himſelf, and without the leaſt Apprehenſion of their appearing abroad in this Dreſs; ſo 'tis hoped it may in ſome meaſure excuſe the Failures with which they come attended.

IF in the preſent Collection, the Reader ſhall ſtill meet with ſome Thoughts, which are not altogether free from Obſcurity, I believe that as his Attention will ſoon render them intelligible, ſo it will engage him to confeſs, that they are no leſs happy than others, and that it was better to preſent them under their own ſententious Brevity, than to explain them by a Multitude of Words, which would only have render'd them faint and languiſhing, and would have defeated one of their principal Graces, the ſaying much in little Compaſs.

AN Inſtance of this kind we have in the Chapter, intitled, *The Proofs of* JESUS CHRIST *by the Prophecies*; where the Author expreſſeth himſelf in the following Terms: *The Prophets have interwoven particular Prophecies with thoſe concerning the* Meſſias: *That neither the Prophecies concerning the* Meſſias *ſhould be without their Proof, nor the particular Prophecies without their Fruit.* In this Fragment, he gives the Reaſon why the Prophets, whoſe Eyes were

were fix'd on the *Meſſias* only, and who, in all appearance, ought to have foretold nothing but what bore a Relation to him, do yet frequently inſert other matters which ſeem to be indifferent and unprofitable to their Deſign. Which, he tells us, was done, that theſe particular Events being accompliſh'd day by day in the Eyes of all the World, exactly as they were foretold, the Authors of them might be inconteſtably acknowledg'd as Prophets; and, conſequently none might doubt of the Truth and Certitude of their Predictions concerning the *Meſſias*: So that by this means as on the one hand, the Prophecies which regarded the *Meſſias*, in ſome ſort derived their Evidence and Authority from the particular Prophecies, which were thus manifeſtly verified; ſo, on the other hand, theſe particular Prophecies, ſerving in ſuch a manner to evince and authorize thoſe which regarded the *Meſſias*, were not without their Fruit and Benefit. This is the Senſe of the abovemention'd Paſſage in its true Light and juſt Extent. But there is no Man who will not take a much greater Pleaſure and Satisfaction in opening it himſelf, than in finding it thus clear'd and unravel'd to his hand.

I think it not impertinent, in order to the undeceiving certain Perſons who may poſſibly expect to meet here with geometrical Proofs

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and Demonſtrations of the Exiſtence of GOD, the Immortality of the Soul, and many other Articles of Chriſtian Faith, to aſſure them, that this was never the Deſign of the Author. He propoſed to evince theſe Truths of Religion not by Demonſtrations, founded on ſelf-evident Principles, and therefore able to overcome the Obſtinacy of the moſt harden'd Infidel; nor by metaphyſical Reaſons, which, very often, rather unſettle than perſwade the Mind; nor by common Places drawn from the divers Effects of Nature; but by moral Arguments, which operate more on the Will, than on the Underſtanding: That is, he reſolv'd to make it his chief Aim, rather to diſpoſe and engage the Heart, than to convince and ſubdue the Judgment; becauſe he knew that the Paſſions and vicious Inclinations which corrupt the Will, are the greateſt Obſtacles and Prejudices which we labour under; and that if theſe were once removed out of the way, the Underſtanding would not long reſiſt the Light and Aſſurance of Faith.

THUS much will be eaſily obſerv'd from the following Papers. But the Author has declar'd himſelf more expreſly on this Point in one of the Fragments which remain unpubliſh'd. *I ſhall not here*, ſays he, *undertake to prove by Natural Reaſons, either the Exiſtence of GOD, or the Myſtery of the Holy*

Holy Trinity, or the Immortality of the Soul, or any other Truth of the ſame Order: Not only becauſe I think my ſelf unable to produce any ſuch Argument from Nature, as ſhall convince a ſettled Atheiſt; but becauſe all ſuch Knowledge, without JESUS CHRIST, *is unprofitable and barren. After a Man was perfectly well perſwaded that the Proportions of Numbers are really immaterial, eternal Truths, depending on the firſt and original Truth in which they ſubſiſt, and which is no other than GOD, I ſhould think him but very little advanced in the Affair of his Salvation.*

SOME, again, may be ſurprized to find in this Collection ſo great a Diverſity of Thoughts; many of which ſeem very remote from the Subject that M. *Paſcal* undertook to illuſtrate. But it ought to be conſider'd that his Deſign was really of a larger Extent than we may imagine, and not level'd barely againſt Atheiſtical Perſons, nor againſt thoſe who deny ſome fundamental Article of Faith. The great Love and ſingular Veneration which he had for Religion made him impatient; not only when he ſaw it directly ſtruck at, but when it was in the leaſt degree corrupted or impair'd. In ſo much, that he profeſſedly oppoſed himſelf to all thoſe who attack'd it either in its Truth, or in its Holineſs; that is, not only Atheiſts,

Atheiſts, Infidels, and Hereticks, who refuſe to ſubmit their falſe Lights of Reaſon to the Evidence of Faith; but even to ſuch *Chriſtians* and *Catholics*, as tho' they continue within the Pale of the Church, yet do not conform their Lives to the Purity of the Goſpel-Maxims, which are propoſed to us, as the Meaſure and Rule of *all* our Actions.

THIS was his Deſign; and this was great and ample enough to take in the Main of what is here collected. Yet the Reader will meet with ſome Obſervations which have no Dependence on it, and which indeed were never conceiv'd under ſuch a Relation; as for inſtance, the greateſt part of thoſe in the Chapter of *Miſcellaneous Thoughts*; which were likewiſe found amongſt the Papers of M. *Paſcal*, and which were therefore permitted to accompany the reſt, becauſe the Book is not now given to the World, barely as a Refutation of Atheiſm, or a Diſcourſe upon Religion, but as a Collection of M. *Paſcal's Thoughts on Religion, and other Subjects*.

I think there is nothing behind in this Preface, but to ſay ſomewhat of the Author, now we have done ſpeaking of his Work. Such an Addition may not only ſeem juſt and proper, but may likewiſe turn to excellent Uſe, by ſhewing us how M. *Paſcal* firſt enter'd into that Eſteem for Religion, and

and thoſe Sentiments about it, which engaged him to form the Model of ſo great an Undertaking.

IN the Preface to his Treatiſes of *the Æquilibrium of Liquors, and of the Gravity of the Air*, a brief Relation has been already given of the manner in which he paſs'd his Childhood; of the vaſt Progreſs made by him, with the greateſt Celerity, in all the Parts of Humane and Profane Knowledge, to which he applied himſelf, eſpecially in the Mathematics; of the ſtrange and ſurprizing Method by which he was taught this laſt Science at the Age of eleven or twelve; of the little Works which he would then compoſe, and which always appear'd far above the Strength and Capacity of thoſe Years; of the prodigious and aſtoniſhing Force of his Genius, diſcover'd in his Arithmetical Inſtrument, which he invented between nineteen and twenty; and, in fine, of his curious Experiments about a *Vacuum*, perform'd at *Roan*, in the Preſence of the moſt conſiderable Perſons of that City, where he reſided for ſome time, while his Father was employ'd there in the King's Service, as *Intendant of Juſtice*. So that I ſhall not repeat what was then ſaid, but only repreſent in a few Words by what means he was at length induced to deſpiſe all theſe things, and with what kind of Spirit he paſs'd

paſs'd his concluding Years; by which he no leſs evidenc'd the Greatneſs and Solidity of his Piety and Virtue, than he had before demonſtrated the Force, the Extent, and the admirable Penetration of his Judgment.

HE had, by the particular Providence of GOD, been preſerv'd from thoſe Vices into which young Gentlemen are ſo often betray'd; and, what ſeem'd very extraordinary in ſo nice and inquiſitive a Genius, he was never diſpoſed to Scepticiſm in religious Matters, having always confined his Curioſity to natural things. He has often ſaid, that he ow'd this Obligation, amongſt many others, to his excellent Father, who, having himſelf the moſt profound Veneration for Religion, took care to inſtil the ſame into him from his Infancy, giving him this for a Maxim, that whatever is the Object of Faith cannot be the Object of Reaſon, and therefore ought much leſs to bow and ſubmit to it.

THESE Inſtructions, frequently repeated to him by a Father for whom he had the higheſt Reſpect, and in whom he obſerv'd a general Knowledge join'd with a ſtrong and piercing Judgment, made ſo deep an Impreſſion on his Spirit, that he was never inclined to the leaſt Doubt by the Diſcourſes which he heard from Libertines; whom, with ſo early a Diſcernment, he look'd upon

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as Men guided by this falſe Principle; that humane Reaſon is above all things, and as thoſe who were utter Strangers to the Nature of Faith.

BUT having paſs'd his youthful Days in ſuch Employments and Diverſions as appear very innocent to the Eyes of the World, it pleas'd GOD ſo to touch his Heart, as to let him perfectly underſtand that the Chriſtian Religion obligeth us to live for GOD only, and to propoſe no other Object or Aim. And this Truth appear'd to him ſo evident, ſo uſeful, and ſo neceſſary; that it made him enter on a Reſolution of retiring and diſengaging himſelf by degrees from all his worldly Dependences, to attend wholly on this one Deſign.

HE had indeed taken up ſuch a Deſire of Privacy, and of devoting himſelf to a more Holy and Chriſtian Life, while very young; and this had before moved him entirely to abandon all profane Studies, in order to the giving himſelf to thoſe only which might be ſerviceable to his own Salvation, and to that of others. But the continual Illneſſes into which he fell, diverted him many Years from his Purpoſe, and retarded the full Execution of it; 'till he arrived at the Age of thirty.

IT was then that he began to labour in it with all his Force; and that he might the

more eaſily obtain his Wiſh, and cut off all his Engagements at one Stroke, he changed his Lodgings, and ſoon after removed into the Country; whence returning after ſome time, he ſo well teſtified his Reſolution of forſaking the World, that, in fine, the World forſook him. The Conduct and Regulation of his Privacy he eſtabliſh'd on theſe two principal Maxims, to renounce all Pleaſure, and all Superfluity; on theſe he ever fix'd his Eye, ſtudying to make nearer Advances towards them, and to attain every Day new degrees of Perfection.

IT was his continual Application to theſe two noble Maxims that enabled him to ſuſtain with ſo exemplary a Patience all his Sickneſs and Sufferings, which ſcarce left him free from Pain during his Life: It was this that enjoyn'd him to practiſe ſo rigorous and ſevere a Mortification towards himſelf, not only denying his Senſes whatever was agreeable to them, but taking without Uneaſineſs or Diſguſt, and even with Joy and Satisfaction, any thing that might ſeem diſtaſtful, when it was proper either as Nouriſhment, or as Phyſick. It was this that engaged him to retrench every Day what he judg'd not abſolutely neceſſary, either in Cloaths, or Food, or Furniture, or in any other Accommodation. It was this that inſpir'd him with ſo great and ardent a Love for Poverty,

ty, as to make it the ruling Thought of his Mind, ſo that he never undertook any thing 'till he had firſt ask'd himſelf, whether Poverty was conſiſtent with ſuch a Propoſal; and on all Occaſions expreſs'd ſo much Tenderneſs and Affection towards the Poor, as never to refuſe an Alms, and many times to beſtow very largely on a charitable Account, tho' out of his own neceſſary Subſiſtence. It was from this that he could not bear any Nicety in providing things for his Convenience or Uſe; and that he ſo much blamed the Humour of ſearching after Curioſities, and the Deſire of excelling in all things, as of employing the very beſt Artiſts, of having every thing made in the neweſt Faſhion, and many other Fancies, which are wont to be gratified without Scruple, becauſe they are look'd upon as harmleſs, tho' to him they bore a quite different Aſpect. To conclude, it was this that prompted him to perform a great Number of moſt remarkable and moſt Chriſtian Actions, which I forbear here to relate, that I may not ſeem tedious; and becauſe I attempt not to compoſe a Life, but only to convey ſome Idea of the Piety and Virtue of M. *Paſcal* to thoſe who had not the Happineſs of his Acquaintance. For, as for thoſe who knew him, and who were admitted to his Company during his latter Years, as I do not

take upon me to inform them by what I write, ſo I doubt not but they will teſtify in my Behalf, that I might ſtill have enlarged on many worthy Particulars, which I have now choſen to paſs over in Silence.

Adver-

Advertiſement.

THE Thoughts which make up this Book having been compoſed and written by Monſieur PASCAL, *after the Manner reported in the Preface, that is, as they happen'd to come into his Mind, without Sequel or Order; the Reader cannot ſuppoſe that he ſhall find any great Regularity in the Chapters of this Collection, which conſiſt, for the moſt part, of many independent Thoughts, ranged together under the ſame Heads, for no other Reaſon but becauſe there appear'd ſome kind of Affinity between their Subjects. But tho' from the bare reading of any Paragraph it might with Eaſe be determin'd whether it be a Continuation of that which preceded, or whether it belongs to a new Deſign; yet, for the more Convenience, it was judg'd proper to make uſe of ſome particular Mark of Diſtinction. Thoſe Paragraphs, therefore, which have an Aſteriſc prefix'd to them, will be known to be ſuch as are of a quite different*

different Piece, and entirely ſeparate from the foregoing. And thoſe which want this Mark will as eaſily be known to make but one and the ſame Diſcourſe, and to have been found in this very Order and Method amongſt the Author's original Papers.

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THE PREFACE OF THF TRANSLATOR.

AS the Name of Monſieur PASCAL *is dear to All who have the Happineſs to be affected with what is either profound in Knowledge, or exact in Wit, ſo the Deſign and Manner of the following Work, are diſplay'd at large in the Excellent Preface of thoſe Friends, by whoſe Care it was made publick. Yet the Tranſlator being obliged to offer ſome Excuſes for himſelf, is contented to premiſe ſome Recommendations of his Author; wiſhing thoſe may appear as juſt as theſe will prove unneceſſary.*

In the main Attempt we are ſhewn what the greateſt Genius could do on the greateſt Subject: For tho' the Draught is far from being finiſh'd, yet it conſiſts entirely of Maſter-ſtrokes, and therefore may the more eaſily be diſpens'd with for the want of Colouring and Shade.

To conſider ſome of the principal Parts. The moſt rational and moſt pathetical Addreſſes

dreſſes to the Sceptics *demonſtrate, that were the utmoſt Latitude indulg'd to theſe Men, 'till they ſhould be loſt in their Privilege of* Free-thinking, *they could not otherwiſe recover and come to themſelves, but by ſettling upon the Foundations of Faith, which is as natural a Cure for the Wandrings of Reaſon, as Reaſon it ſelf is for the Extravagancies of Imagination; and that the only Cauſe why ſo many have miſcarried in this Adventure, has been their Want of Strength to go thro' the Courſe, and to ride out that Storm, which Vice or Raſhneſs had brought upon their Faculties. It will be obſerv'd, that in one Eſſay againſt this Spirit of Indifference, the Author has proceeded upon the Suppoſition of his Adverſaries, and has evinced, that if Reaſon (as is pretended) were doubtful in the Caſe, yet Prudence ought to incline to the ſafer Side. But it ſhould likewiſe be obſerv'd, that a peculiar Advertiſement is prefix'd to that Chapter, and that this was a way of arguing which Monſieur* Paſcal, *or his Friends, confeſs'd to ſtand in need of an Apology.*

The metaphyſical Speculations ſeem moſt refined and accompliſh'd, not only for their ſurprizing Novelty, and for the engaging Manner in which they are deliver'd, but chiefly on account of thoſe more ſublime Views in which they terminate and conſpire. For

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'tis abſurd to condemn the Jejuneneſs of the Ancients in this Science, if our Reaſonings be as Heatheniſh as their Language was barbarous; and if inſtead of the dry Trunks of their Terms and Diſtinctions, (which, being rightly tranſplanted, we might improve into uſeful Fruit) we cultivate an unprofitable Elegance, and under all the Verdure of Expreſſion, betray a Barrenneſs of Thought: Which is yet the Caſe of theſe abſtracted Doctrines, when rais'd upon Principles merely humane; upon that Wiſdom which is earthly, and cometh of the Earth, *but is not water'd from above, or mingled with the Fountains of Truth: Whereas, therefore, ſome profeſſing this retired Knowledge, have much impair'd the Credit of their Labours, by ſeeming to derogate from that of the Holy Scripture; M.* PASCAL, *by his accurate Knowledge of its Harmony and Agreement, his peculiar Diſcernment of Prophecies and Miracles, and his ſingular Art of illuſtrating and comparing different Texts, has made it appear venerable, even to ſuch as are not wont to read it with his Sincerity of Intention, and his truly* Chriſtian *Heart.*

How uſeful are thoſe curious Enquiries concerning the Extent and Diviſibility of Matter, and the Powers of Numbers, (of which the Author had ſo vaſt a Comprehen-

ſion) in rendering the Myſteries of Nature ſubſervient to thoſe of Faith; in abaſing the Pride of our Underſtanding, and in aſcribing Glory to Him *who alone is truly* Infinite, *and who, while he has given us Ability to make and compare theſe ſeeming Infinities, does yet preſent us with ſomething, even in theſe, which is much more unfathomable to our Perfections, than commenſurate to his own? How may the Reflexions upon Mankind, ſo ſprightly and vigorous, ſo penetrating and ſenſible, invite us to obſerve, that the Sentence which the wiſeſt of Men, ſo long ſince pronounced on mortal* Vanity, *has been moſt ſtrongly confirm'd by thoſe who have made the neareſt Approaches to his Wiſdom; and that, as he reſolv'd* the whole Matter, (*all that was good or great in Life*) *into the* fearing GOD and keeping his Commandments, *ſo theſe have center'd all their Contemplations in religious Belief and Practice, as the only things which can reſtore the Credit of our Nature, and reconcile us to our own good Opinion? How do the Thoughts upon Death exalt the Conſolations of Philoſophy into the Hope and Aſſurance of Religion? Did* Æmilius, *or* Cato, *or* Tully, *deliver themſelves with ſo compoſed Gravity, and yet ſo tender Affection, on the Loſs of their Children, as* M. PASCAL *has done, on that of his Father? Or, was he not, indeed, an*

early

early Proficient in that better School, and Diſcipline, which alone could make him wiſer than the Ancients, *and give him* more Underſtanding *than thoſe* Teachers *and* Examples? *Laſtly, does he not, in the Chapter of* Miſcellaneous Thoughts, *diſcover the ſame true Reliſh of what is juſt and natural, in Style and Behaviour, as before, of what is deep and ſolid in Reaſon? And does not the Prayer annex'd, by evincing what this great and univerſal Capacity was animated by a true Spirit of Humility and Devotion, ſeem equally proper, to compleat his Character and his Works?*

The Tranſlator having been almoſt inſenſibly engaged in this delightful Task, was afterwards induced to communicate the Satisfaction; knowing there were ſtill many Perſons of Learning and Judgment who continued Strangers to the Language of the Original, either as neglecting ſo eaſy a Conqueſt, or as deſpiſing an Attainment, which is now become rather Vulgar *than* Faſhionable.

How much ſoever the Performance may have ſuffer'd for want of thoſe Advantages which were peculiar to the Author, yet it is here preſented entire, excepting ſome Lines which directly favour'd the diſtinguiſhing Doctrines of thoſe of the Roman *Communion. If that excellent Perſon thought fit to pay*

this

this Submiſſion to the Authority of his own Church, we cannot be injurious to him, in expreſſing the like Veneration for ours. But conſidering the great Liberty with which theſe Fragments were put together, it is not wholly improbable that M. PASCAL's *Friends might officiouſly inſert ſome Marks of this kind, to prove him* (*in their Notion*) a good Catholic, *and to ſhelter his Memory from the Odium of ſome, whom in another admirable Book,* (Lettres aux Provinciaux) *he had proved not to be very* Good Chriſtians. *Yet, as to any ſuch Paſſages, it is not ſo generous to diſpute the manner of their coming in, as to be ſatisfied with the Power of leaving them out.*

At the Beginning of the French *Editions, we commonly meet with the large Approbations of the Biſhops and Clergy; and, at the End, with two Diſcourſes, one on this Piece, the other on the Proofs of the Books of* Moſes. *The former, as they are not here needful, ſo in ſome Reſpect they might have ſeem'd prejudicial. The latter would have paſs'd with Reputation, had they not the Diſadvantage of appearing with M.* PASCAL's *Compoſitions; which is yet perhaps a greater Praiſe than the* TRANSLATOR *could obtain, ſhould he now enlarge his Preface to a Treatiſe on his* AUTHOR's *Arguments.*

Monſieur *PASCAL*'s THOUGHTS.

I.

Againſt an Atheiſtical Indifference.

IT were to be wiſhed, that the Enemies of Religion would at leaſt bring themſelves to apprehend its Nature, before they oppoſed its Authority. Did Religion make its Boaſt of beholding God with a clear and perfect View, and of poſſeſſing him without Covering or Veil, the Argument would bear ſome Colour, when Men ſhould alledge, that none of the Things about them do indeed afford this pretended

Evidence, and this Degree of Light. But ſince Religion, on the contrary, repreſents Men as in a State of Darkneſs, and of Eſtrangement from GOD; ſince it affirms him to have withdrawn himſelf from their Diſcovery, and to have choſen, in his Word, the very Style and Appellation of *Deus abſconditus;* laſtly, ſince it imploys itſelf alike in eſtabliſhing theſe two Maxims, that GOD has left in his Church certain Characters of himſelf, by which they who ſincerely ſeek him ſhall not fail of a ſenſible Conviction, and yet that he has, at the ſame time, ſo far ſhaded and obſcured theſe Characters as to render them imperceptible to thoſe who do not ſeek him with their whole Heart, what Advantage is to Men, who profeſs themſelves negligent in the Search of Truth, to complain ſo frequently that nothing reveals and diſplays it to them? For this very Obſcurity under which they labour, and which they make an Exception againſt the Church, does itſelf evince one of the two grand Points which the Church maintains, (without affecting the other,) and is ſo far from overthrowing its Doctrines, as to lend them a manifeſt Confirmation and Support.

IF they would give their Objections any Strength, they ought to urge, that they have applied their utmoſt Endeavour, and have uſed

uſed all Means of Information, even thoſe which the Church recommends, without Satisfaction. Did they expreſs themſelves thus, they would indeed attack Religion in one of its chief Pretenſions: But I hope to ſhew in the following Papers, that no rational Perſon can ſpeak after this Manner, and I dare aſſert that none ever did. We know very well how Men under this Indifferency of Spirit behave themſelves in the Caſe: They ſuppoſe themſelves to have made the mightieſt Effort towards the Inſtruction of their Minds, when they have ſpent ſome Hours in reading the Scriptures, and have ask'd ſome Queſtions of a Clergyman concerning the Articles of Faith. When this is done, they declare to all the World, that they have conſulted Books and Men without Succeſs. I ſhall be excuſed if I refrain not from telling ſuch Men, (what I have often told them,) that this Neglect of theirs is inſupportable. 'Tis not a foreign or a petty Intereſt, which is here in Debate: We are ourſelves the the Parties, and all our Hopes and Fortunes are the depending Stake.

THE Immortality of the Soul is a Thing which ſo deeply concerns, ſo infinitely imports us, that we muſt have utterly loſt our Feeling, to be altogether cold and remiſs in our Enquiries about it. And all our Actions or Deſigns, ought to bend ſo very different

a Way, according as we are either encouraged or forbidden, to embrace the Hope of eternal Rewards, that 'tis impoſſible for us to proceed with Judgment and Diſcretion, otherwiſe than as we keep this Point always in View, which ought to be our ruling Object and final Aim.

THUS is it our higheſt Intereſt, no leſs than our principal Duty, to get Light into a Subject on which our whole Conduct depends. And, therefore, in the Number of wavering and unſatisfy'd Men, I make the greateſt Difference imaginable between thoſe who labour with all their Force to obtain Inſtruction, and thoſe who live without giving themſelves any Trouble, or ſo much as any Thought in this Affair.

I CANNOT but be touched with a hearty Compaſſion for thoſe who ſincerely groan under this Diſſatisfaction; who look upon it as the greateſt of Misfortunes, and who ſpare no Pains to deliver themſelves from it, by making theſe Reſearches their chief Imployment and moſt ſerious Study. But as for thoſe who paſs their Life without reflecting on its Iſſue, and who, for this Reaſon alone, becauſe they find not in themſelves a convincing Teſtimony, refuſe to ſeek it elſewhere, and to examine to the Bottom, whether the Opinion propoſed be ſuch as we are wont to entertain by popular Simplicity

city and Credulity, or ſuch as, though obſcure in itſelf, yet is built on ſolid and immovable Foundations, I conſider *them* after quite another Manner. The Careleſneſs which they betray in an Affair, where their Perſon, their Intereſt, their whole Eternity is embarked, rather provokes my Reſentment than engages my Pity. Nay, it ſtrikes me with Amazement and Aſtoniſhment; 'tis a Monſter to my Apprehenſion. I ſpeak not this as tranſported with the pious Zeal of a ſpiritual and rapturous Devotion: On the contrary, I affirm, that the Love of ourſelves, the Intereſt of Mankind, and the moſt ſimple and artleſs Reaſon, do naturally inſpire us with theſe Sentiments; and that to ſee thus far, is not to exceed the Sphere of unrefined, uneducated Men.

IT requires no great Elevation of Soul, to obſerve that nothing in this World is productive of true Contentment; that our Pleaſures are vain and fugitive, our Troubles innumerable and perpetual: And that, after all, Death which threatens us every Moment, muſt, in the Compaſs of a few Years, (perhaps of a few Days,) put us into the eternal Condition of *Happineſs*, or *Miſery*, or *Nothing*. Between us and theſe three great Periods, or States, no Barrier is interpoſed but *Life*, the moſt brittle Thing in all Nature; and the Happineſs of Heaven

being certainly not deſigned for thoſe who doubt whether they have an immortal Part to enjoy it, ſuch Perſons have nothing left, but the miſerable Chance of Annihilation or of Hell.

THERE is not any Reflexion which can have more Reality than this, as there is none which has greater Terror. Let us ſet the braveſt Face on our Condition, and play the Heroes as artfully as we can; yet ſee here the Iſſue which attends the goodlieſt Life upon Earth.

'TIS in vain for Men to turn aſide their Thoughts from this Eternity which awaits them, as if they were able to deſtroy it by denying it a Place in their Imagination: It ſubſiſts in ſpight of *Them*, it advanceth unobſerved; and Death, which is to draw the Curtain from it, will in a ſhort Time infallibly reduce them to the dreadful Neceſſity of being for ever Nothing, or for ever Miſerable.

WE have here a Doubt of the moſt affrighting Conſequence, and which, therefore, to entertain may be well eſteemed the moſt grievous of Misfortunes: But, at the ſame Time, 'tis our indiſpenſable Duty not to lie under it without ſtruggling for Deliverance.

HE then who doubts, and yet ſeeks not to be reſolved, is equally unhappy and unjuſt:

juſt: But if withal he appears eaſy and compoſed, if he freely declares his Indifference, nay, if he takes a Vanity in profeſſing it, and ſeems to make this moſt deplorable Condition the Subject of his Pleaſure and Joy, I have not Words to fix a Name on ſo extravagant a Creature. Where's the very Poſſibility of entring into theſe Thoughts and Reſolutions? What Delight is there in expecting Miſery without End? What Vanity in finding one's ſelf encompaſſed with impenetrable Darkneſs? or what Conſolation in deſpairing for ever of a Comforter?

To ſit down with ſome ſort of Acquieſcence under ſo fatal an Ignorance, is a Thing unaccountable beyond all Expreſſion; and they who live with ſuch a Diſpoſition, ought to be made ſenſible of its Abſurdity and Stupidity, by having their inward Reflections laid open to them, that they may grow wiſe by the Proſpect of their own Folly. For behold how Men are wont to reaſon, while they obſtinately remain thus ignorant of what they are, and refuſe all Methods of Inſtruction and Illumination.

WHO has ſent me into the World I know not; what the World is I know not, nor what I am myſelf. I am under an aſtoniſhing and terrifying Ignorance of all Things. I know not what my Body is, what my

Senſes, or my Soul: This very Part of me which thinks what I ſpeak, which reflects upon every Thing elſe, and even upon itſelf, yet is as a mere Stranger to its own Nature, as the dulleſt Thing I carry about me. I behold theſe frightful Spaces of the Univerſe with which I am encompaſſed, and I find myſelf chained to one little Corner of the vaſt Extent, without underſtanding why I am placed in this Seat, rather than in any other, or why this Moment of Time given me to live, was aſſigned rather at ſuch a Point, than at any other of the whole Eternity which was before me, or of all that which is to come after me. I ſee nothing but Infinities on all Sides, which devour and ſwallow me up like an Atom, or like a Shadow, which endures but a ſingle Inſtant, and is never to return. The Sum of my Knowledge is, that I muſt ſhortly die; but that which I am moſt ignorant of is this very Death, which I feel myſelf unable to decline.

As I know not whence I came, ſo I know not whether I go; only this I know, that at my Departure out of the World, I muſt either fall for ever into nothing, or into the Hands of an incenſed GOD, without being capable of deciding, which of theſe two Conditions ſhall eternally be my Portion. Such is my State, full of Weakneſs, Obſcurity, and Wretch-

Wretchedneſs. And from all this I conclude, That I ought, therefore, to paſs all the Days of my Life, without conſidering what is hereafter to befall me; and that I have nothing to do, but to follow my Inclinations without Reflexion or Diſquiet, in doing all that, which if what Men ſay of a miſerable Eternity prove true, will infallibly plunge me into it. 'Tis poſſible I might find ſome Light to clear up my Doubts; but I ſhall not take a Minute's Pains, nor ſtir one Foot in the Search of it. On the contrary, I am reſolved to treat thoſe with Scorn and Deriſion who labour in this Enquiry and Care; and, ſo to run without Fear or Foreſight, upon the Tryal of the grand Event; permitting myſelf to be led ſoftly on to Death, utterly uncertain as to the eternal Iſſue of my future Condition.

IN earneſt, 'tis a Glory to Religion to have ſo unreaſonable Men for its profeſſed Enemies; and their Oppoſition is of ſo little Danger, that it ſerves to illuſtrate the principal Truths which our Religion teaches. For the main Scope of *Chriſtian* Faith is to eſtabliſh theſe two Principles, the Corruption of Nature, and the Redemption by *Jeſus Chriſt*. And theſe Oppoſers, if they are of no uſe towards demonſtrating the Truth of the Redemption, by the Sanctity of their Lives, yet are at leaſt admirably uſeful in

ſhewing

ſhewing the Corruption of Nature, by ſo unnatural Sentiments and Suggeſtions.

NOTHING is ſo important to any Man as his own Eſtate and Condition; nothing ſo great, ſo amazing, as Eternity. If, therefore, we find Perſons indifferent to the Loſs of their Being, and to the Danger of endleſs Miſery, 'tis impoſſible that this Temper ſhould be natural. They are quite other Men in all other Regards, they fear the ſmalleſt Inconveniences, they ſee them as they approach, and feel them if they arrive; and he who paſſeth Days and Nights in Chagrine or Deſpair, for the Loſs of an Imployment, or for ſome imaginary Blemiſh in his Honour, is the very ſame Mortal who knows that he muſt loſe all by Death, and yet remains without Diſquiet, Reſentment, or Emotion. This wonderful Inſenſibility, with reſpect to Things of the moſt fatal Conſequence, in a Heart ſo nicely ſenſible of the meaneſt Trifles, is an aſtoniſhing Prodigy, and unintelligible Enchantment, a ſupernatural Blindneſs and Infatuation.

A MAN in a cloſe Dungeon, who knows not whether Sentence of Death has paſs'd upon him; who is allow'd but one Hour's Space to inform himſelf concerning it, and that one Hour ſufficient, in caſe it have paſſed, to obtain its Reverſe, would act contrary to Nature and Senſe, ſhould he make uſe

uſe of this Hour not to procure Information, but to purſue his Vanity or Sport. And yet ſuch is the Condition of the Perſons whom we are now deſcribing; only with this Difference, that the Evils with which they are every Moment threaten'd, do infinitely ſurpaſs the bare Loſs of Life, and that tranſient Puniſhment which the Priſoner is ſuppoſed to apprehend: Yet they run thoughtleſs upon the Precipice, having only caſt a Veil over their Eyes to hinder them from diſcerning it, and divert themſelves with the Officiouſneſs of ſuch as charitably warn them of their Danger.

THUS not the Zeal alone of thoſe who heartily ſeek GOD demonſtrates the Truth of Religion, but likewiſe the Blindneſs of thoſe who utterly forbear to ſeek him, and who paſs their Days under ſo horrible a Neglect. There muſt needs be a ſtrange Turn and Revolution in human Nature, before Men can ſubmit to ſuch a Condition, much more e'er they can applaud and value themſelves upon it. For ſuppoſing them to have obtained an abſolute Certainty that there was no Fear after Death, but of falling into Nothing, ought not this to be the Subject rather of Deſpair than of Jollity? And is it not therefore the higheſt Pitch of ſenſeleſs Extravagance, while we want this Certainty, to glory in our Doubt and Diſtruſt?

AND

AND yet, after all, it is too viſible, that Man has ſo far declined from his original Nature, and as it were departed from himſelf, to nouriſh in his Heart a ſecret Seed-Plot of Joy, ſpringing up from the Libertine Reflections. This brutal Eaſe or Indolence, between the Fear of Hell and of Annihilation, carries ſomewhat ſo tempting in it, that not only thoſe who have the Misfortune to be ſceptically inclin'd, but even thoſe who cannot unſettle their Judgement, do yet eſteem it reputable to take up even a counterfeit Diffidence. For we may obſerve the largeſt Part of the Herd to be of this latter Kind, falſe Pretenders to Infidelity, and mere Hypocrites in Atheiſm. There are Perſons whom we have heard declare, that the genteel Way of the World conſiſts in thus acting the Bravo. This is that which they term *throwing off the Yoak*, and which the greater Number of them profeſs, not ſo much out of Opinion, as out of Gallantry and Complaiſance.

YET, if they have the leaſt Reſerve of common Senſe, it will not be difficult to make them apprehend, how miſerably they abuſe themſelves by laying ſo falſe a Foundation of Applauſe and Eſteem. For this is not the Way to raiſe a Character, even with worldly Men, who, as they are able to paſs a ſhrew'd Judgment on Things, ſo they

they eaſily diſcern that the only Method of ſucceeding in our temporal Affairs, is to prove ourſelves honeſt, faithful, prudent, and capable of advancing the Intereſt of our Friends; becauſe Men naturally love nothing but that which ſome way contributes to their Uſe and Benefit. But now what Benefit can we any way derive from hearing a Man confeſs that he has eaſed himſelf of the Burthen of Religion; that he believe no GOD, as the Witneſs and Inſpector of his Conduct; that he conſiders himſelf as abſolute Maſter of what he does, and accountable for it only to his own Mind? Will he fancy that we ſhall be hence induced to repoſe a greater Degree of Confidence in him hereafter? or to depend on his Comfort, his Advice, or Aſſiſtance, in the Neceſſities of Life? Can he imagine us to take any great Delight or Complacency when he tells us, that he doubts whether our very Soul be any Thing more than a little Wind and Smoke? nay, when he tells it us with an Air of Aſſurance, and a Voice that teſtifies the Contentment of his Heart? Is this a Thing to be ſpoken of with Pleaſantry? or ought it not rather to be lamented with the deepeſt Sadneſs, as the moſt melancholick Reflection that can ſtrike our Thoughts?

IF they would compoſe themſelves to ſerious Conſideration, they muſt perceive the Method in which they are engaged to be ſo very ill choſen, ſo repugnant to Gentility, and ſo remote even from that good Air and Grace which they purſue, that, on the contrary, nothing can more effectually expoſe them to the Contempt and Averſion of Mankind, or mark them out for Perſons defective in Parts and Judgment. And, indeed, ſhould we demand from them an Account of their Sentiments, and of the Reaſons which they have to entertain this Suſpicion in Religious Matters, what they offered would appear ſo miſerably weak and trifling, as rather to confirm us in our Belief. This is no more than what one of their own Fraternity told them, with great Smartneſs, on ſuch an Occaſion, *If You continue* (ſays he) *to diſpute at this rate, You'll infallibly make me a Chriſtian.* And the Gentleman was in the right: For who would not tremble to find himſelf embark'd in the ſame Cauſe with ſo forlorn, ſo deſpicable Companions?

AND thus it is evident, that they who wear no more than the outward Maſk of theſe Principles, are the moſt unhappy Counterfeits in the World; inaſmuch as they are obliged to put a continual Force and Conſtraint on their Genius, only that they

they may render themſelves the moſt impertinent of all Men living.

IF they are heartily and ſincerely troubled at their want of Light, let them not diſſemble the Diſeaſe. Such a Confeſſion could not be reputed ſhameful; for there is really no Shame, but in being ſhameleſs. Nothing betrays ſo much Weakneſs of Soul, as not to apprehend the Miſery of Man, while living *without GOD in the World:* Nothing is a ſurer Token of extreme Baſeneſs of Spirit, than not to hope for the Reality of Eternal Promiſes: No Man is ſo ſtigmatized a Coward, as he that acts the Bravo againſt Heaven. Let them therefore leave theſe Impieties to thoſe who are born with ſo unhappy a Judgment, as to be capable of entertaining them in earneſt. If they cannot be *Chriſtian Men*, let them, however, be *Men of Honour:* And let them, in Concluſion, acknowledge, that there are but two ſorts of Perſons, who deſerve to be ſtiled reaſonable, either thoſe who ſerve GOD with all their Heart, becauſe they know him; or thoſe who ſeek him with all their Heart, becauſe as yet they know him not.

IF then there are Perſons who ſincerely enquire after GOD, and who, being truly ſenſible of their Miſery, affectionately deſire to be reſcued from it; it is to theſe alone that

that we can in Juſtice afford our Labour and Service, for their Direction in finding out that Light of which they feel the Want.

BUT as for thoſe who live without either knowing GOD, or endeavouring to know him, they look on themſelves as ſo little deſerving their own Care, that they cannot but be unworthy the Care of others: And it requires all the Charity of the Religion which they deſpiſe, not to deſpiſe *them* to ſuch a Degree, as even to abandon them to their own Folly: But ſince the ſame Religion obliges us to conſider them, while they remain in this Life, as ſtill capable of GOD's enlightening Grace; and to acknowledge it as very poſſible, that, in the Courſe of a few Days, they may be repleniſhed with a fuller Meaſure of Faith than we now enjoy; and we ourſelves, on the other Side, fall into the Depths of their preſent Blindneſs and Miſery; we ought to do for them what we deſire ſhould be done to us in their Caſe; to intreat them that they would take pity on themſelves, and would at leaſt advance a Step or two forward, if perchance they may come into the Light. For which End it is wiſh'd, that they would imploy in the Peruſal of this Piece, ſome few of thoſe Hours which they ſpend ſo unprofitably in other Purſuits. 'Tis poſſible they may gain ſomewhat

what by the reading, at leaſt, they cannot be great Loſers: But if any ſhall apply themſelves to it, with perfect Sincerity, and with an unfeigned Deſire of knowing the Truth, I deſpair not of *their* Satisfaction, or of their being convinced by ſo many Proofs of our divine Religion, as they will here find laid together.

II.

Marks of the True Religion.

THE true Religion ought chiefly to diſtinguiſh itſelf, by obliging Men to the Love of GOD. This is what natural Juſtice requires, and yet what no Inſtitution beſides the Chriſtian has ever commanded.

IT ought likewiſe to have ſome Apprehenſion of the innate Concupiſcence of Man, and of his utter Inſufficiency for the Attainment of Virtue by his own Strength, and ſome Skill in applying the proper Remedies to this Defect; of which Prayer is the Principal. Our Religion has performed all this, and none beſides has ever beg-

ged of GOD the Power of loving and of obeying him.

* To make out the Truth and Certainty of a Religion, 'tis neceſſary that it ſhould have obtain'd the Knowledge of human Nature. For our true Nature and true Happineſs, true Virtue and true Religion, are Things, the Knowledge of which is reciprocal and inſeparable. It ſhould alſo be able to diſcern the Greatneſs and the Meanneſs of human Condition; together with the Cauſe and Reaſon of both. What Religion, the Chriſtian only excepted, could ever pretend to be thus knowing?

* OTHER Religions, as thoſe of the Heathens, are more popular, as conſiſting only in external Appearance; but then they are unqualified for moving the Judicious and Prudent. Again, ſhould any Religion reſide altogether in the inward Spirit, it might be fitter to work on Parts and Genius, but could hold no Influence over the Groſs of Mankind. Chriſtianity alone is proportioned to all Capacities, being duly compoſed, and temper'd of the internal and the external Way. It raiſes the moſt Ignorant to inward and ſpiritual Acts, and at the ſame Time abaſes the moſt Intelligent, by preſſing the Obligation to outward Performances, and is never compleat but when it joins one of theſe Effects to the other:

For

For there is the like Neceſſity that the People ſhould underſtand the *Spirit*, which is veil'd under the *Letter*, and that the Learned ſhould ſubmit their Spirit to the *Letter*, in complying with exterior Practices and Rites.

* THAT there is ſomewhat in us which ought to be hated, bare Reaſon will convince us; and yet there is no Religion but the Chriſtian which enjoins us to hate ourſelves; wherefore no other Religion ought to be entertain'd by thoſe who know and confeſs themſelves to be worthy of nothing but Hatred.

* No Religion, except the Chriſtian, has known Man to be the moſt excellent of viſible Creatures, and at the ſame Time the moſt miſerable. Some having apprehended the Reality of his Excellence, have cenſur'd, as mean and ungrateful, the low Opinion which Men naturally entertain of their own Condition. Others, well knowing the unhappy Effects of his Baſeneſs and Miſery, have expoſed as ridiculouſly vain thoſe Notions of Grandeur, which are no leſs natural to Men.

* IT is *our* Religion which has firſt taught that Man is born in Sin: No Sect of Philoſophers ever ſaid this; therefore no Sect ever ſaid the Truth.

* THE divine Nature being removed from human Thoughts and Diſcovery, every Religion which does not confeſs it to be ſo, is falſe; and every Religion which does not ſhew the Reaſon why it is ſo, muſt be barren and unedifying: Our Religion has performed both Parts.

* THAT Religion, which conſiſts in believing the Fall of Man from a State of Glory and Communication with God, to a State of Sorrow, Humiliation, and Eſtrangement from God, together with his Reſtoration by a *Meſſias*, has always been in the World. All Things are paſſed away, and this remains for which all Things were: For God, in his Wiſdom, deſigning to form to himſelf a holy People, whom he ſhould ſeparate from all other Nations, ſhould deliver from their Enemies, and ſhould ſettle in a Place of a Reſt, was pleas'd expreſly to promiſe, not only that he would accompliſh this Mercy, but that he would come himſelf into the World for its Performance, foretelling by his Prophets the very Time and Manner of his Coming: Yet, in the mean while, to confirm the Hope of his Elect through all Ages, he continually afforded them the Pledges of Types and Figures, and never left them without Aſſurances, as well of his Power, as of his Inclination to ſave them: For immediately

mediately after the firſt Creation, *Adam* was the Witneſs and Depoſitary of the Promiſe concerning a Saviour to be born of the Seed of the Woman; and though Men, while they ſtood ſo near to their own Originals, could not forget the Gift of their Being, the Shame of their Fall, or the divine Promiſe of a Redeemer, yet ſince the World in its very Infancy was overrun with all Sorts of Corruptions and Diſorders, God was pleas'd to raiſe up holy Men, as *Enoch*, *Lamech*, and others, who, with a peculiar Faith and Patience, waited for the Author of their Deliverance. After this, when the Wickedneſs of Men was arrived at its Pitch, we read of God's ſending *Noah* on a ſpecial Commiſſion, and of his reſcuing him from the common Deſtruction; a Miracle which teſtified at once the Power of God to ſave the World, and his Will to perform this, by raiſing up to the Woman the Seed which he had promiſed. This ſignal Act of Omnipotence was enough to ſtrengthen the Expectation of Mankind, and the Memory of it was ſtill freſh, when God renewed his Promiſes to *Abraham*, (who dwelt in the Midſt of Idolaters,) and opened to him the Myſtery of the *Meſſias* that was to come. In the Days of *Iſaac* and *Jacob* the Abomination was ſpread over the whole Earth; yet theſe holy Pa-

triarchs lived in Faith, and the latter of them, as he bleſt his Children before his approaching Death, refrain'd not from crying out with a pious Tranſport, which interrupted his Diſcourſe, *I will wait for thy Salvation, O* LORD: *Salutare tuum expectabo, Domine.*

THE *Egyptians* were beſotted with Idolatry and Magick; nor did the People of GOD eſcape the Infection of their Example; yet *Moſes,* with other excellent Perſons, ſaw him whom they ſaw not, and adored him, and had Reſpect unto the eternal Recompence which he was preparing for them.

THE *Greeks* and *Romans* introduced a new Multitude of fictitious Deities: The Poets advanced their repugnant Syſtems of Theology: The Philoſophers broke out into a thouſand different Sects and Clans; yet were there always in the little Corner of *Judæa* choſen Men, who foretold the Coming of the *Meſſias,* unknown to all but themſelves.

HE came at length in the Fulneſs of Time; and ever ſince his Appearance, notwithſtanding the numerous Births of Schiſms and Hereſies, the Revolutions in Government, and the utter Change in all Things, the ſame Church, whoſe Glory it is to adore *him* who has been ever adored, ſtill ſubſiſts without

without Interruption or Decay. And what muſt be own'd to be incomparably excellent, wonderful, and altogether divine, this Religion which has ever ſubſiſted, has ever been oppoſed: A thouſand Times has it been on the very Brink of univerſal Ruin; and as often as it has been reduced to this Eſtate, ſo often has it been relieved by ſome extraordinary Interpoſal of Almighty Power. 'Tis aſtoniſhing, that it ſhould never want a Miracle to deliver it in Extremity, and that it ſhould be able to maintain itſelf, without bending to the Will of Tyrants and Oppreſſors.

* CIVIL States muſt infallibly periſh, if they did not many Times permit their Laws to give way to Neceſſity: But Religion, as it has never ſuffered this Violence, though it has never ſtoop'd to this Compliance, yet here muſt be ſuch Accommodations and Submiſſions, or there muſt be a miraculous Support. It's no wonder that Empires and Governments ſhould procure their Safety by thus bending and bowing; and 'tis indeed improper, in this Caſe, to ſay that they maintain or uphold themſelves; yet we ſee that they, at length, find an utter Diſſolution; nor has any one amongſt them been ſo long-liv'd as to reach the Period of 1500 Years: But that Religion ſhould have always kept its Ground by always conti-

nuing unalterable and unflexible, this is truly great and providential.

* THUS has the Belief in the *Meſſias* been derived down by a conſtant Series, and uninterrupted Courſe. The Tradition from *Adam* was freſh and lively in *Noah*, and even in *Moſes*. After theſe the Prophets bore Teſtimony to him, at the ſame Time predicting other Things, which being from Day to Day fulfill'd, in the Eyes of all the World, demonſtrated the Truth of their Miſſion, and conſequently of their Promiſes in this Behalf. They unanimouſly declared, that the legal Ordinances were but preparatory to the *Meſſias*'s Inſtitution; that till ſuch a Time the former ſhould indeed ſubſiſt without Intermiſſion, but that the latter ſhould endure for ever; and that by this Means either the Law of *Moſes*, or that of the *Meſſias*, which is prefigured, ſhould always continue upon Earth; and, in fact, there has been ſuch a Continuance to our Days. JESUS CHRIST came agreeably to all the Circumſtances of their Predictions: He perform'd Miracles in his own Perſon, and by the Hands of his Apoſtles, whom he appointed for the Converſion of the Gentile World: And the Prophecies being thus once accompliſh'd, the *Meſſias* is for ever demonſtrated.

THAT

* THAT Religion, which alone is contrary to our Nature, in its preſent Eſtate, which declares War againſt all our Pleaſures and Inclinations, and which, upon a ſlight and tranſient View, ſeems repugnant even to common Senſe, is that alone which has ſubſiſted from the Beginning.

* IT is neceſſary that the whole Current of Things ſhould bear a regard to the Eſtabliſhment and the Grandeur of Religion; that there ſhould be implanted in Men Sentiments agreeable to its Precepts; and in a Word, that it ſhould ſo viſibly be the great Object and Centre towards which all Things tend, that whoſoever underſtands it Principles, may be thence enabled to give an Account, as of human Nature in particular, ſo, in general, of the whole State and Order of the World.

'TIS upon this very Foundation that wicked and profane Men are wont to build their blaſphemous Calumnies againſt the Chriſtian Religion, only becauſe they miſunderſtand it. They imagine that it conſiſts purely in the Adoration of the Divinity, conſider'd as great, powerful, and eternal. This is properly Deiſm, and ſtands almoſt as far removed from Chriſtianity as Atheiſm, which is directly oppoſite to it. Yet hence they would infer the Falſhood of our Religion; becauſe (ſay they) were

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it true, GOD would have manifeſted himſelf under its Diſpenſation by ſo viſible Tokens, that it ſhould have been impoſſible for any Man not to know him.

BUT let them conclude what they will againſt Deiſm, they will be able to draw no ſuch Concluſion to the Prejudice of Chriſtianity; which acknowledges, that, ſince the Fall, GOD does not manifeſt himſelf to us with all the Evidence that is poſſible; and which conſiſts properly in the Myſtery of a Redeemer, who by ſuſtaining at once the divine and human Natures, has recover'd Men out of the Corruption of Sin, that he might reconcile them to GOD in his divine Perſon.

TRUE Religion, therefore, inſtructs Men in theſe two Principles, That there is a GOD whom they are capable of knowing and enjoying; and that there are ſuch Corruptions in their Nature as render them unworthy of him. There is the ſame Importance in apprehending the one and the other of theſe Points: And 'tis alike dangerous for Man to know GOD without the Knowledge of his own Miſery, and to know his own Miſery without the Knowledge of a Redeemer, who may deliver him from it. To apprehend one without the other, begets either the Pride of Philoſophers, who knew GOD, but not their own

own Misery; or the Despair of Atheists, who know their own Misery, but not the Author of their Deliverance.

AND as it is of equal Necessity to Man, that he should obtain the Knowledge of both these Principles, so is it equally agreeable to the Mercy of GOD, that he should afford the Means of such a Knowledge. To perform this, is the Office, and the very Essence of Christianity.

UPON this Foot let Men examine the Order and Oeconomy of the World, and let them see whether all Things do not conspire in establishing these two Fundamentals of our Religion.

* IF any one knows not himself to be full of Pride and Ambition, of Concupiscence and Injustice, of Weakness and Wretchedness, he is blind beyond Dispute. And if any one who knows himself to labour under these Defects, at the same Time desires not to be rescued from them, what can we say of a Man who has thus abandoned his Reason? What remains then, but that we preserve the highest Veneration for a Religion, which so well understands the Infirmities of Mankind? and that we profess the heartiest Wishes for the Truth of a Religion, which engageth to heal those Infirmities by so happy, so desirable a Relief?

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The true Religion proved by the Contrarieties which are diſcoverable in Man, and by the Doctrine of Original Sin.

THE Greatneſs and the Miſery of Man being alike conſpicuous, it is neceſſary the true Religion ſhould declare, that he contains in himſelf ſome noble Principle of Greatneſs, and, at the ſame Time ſome profound Source of Miſery. For the true Religion cannot anſwer its Character otherwiſe than by ſearching our Nature to the Bottom; ſo as perfectly to underſtand all that is great and all that is miſerable in it, together with the Reaſon of one and of the other. Religion is farther oblig'd to account for thoſe aſtoniſhing Contrarieties which we find within us. If there be but one Principle, or efficient Cauſe, one Author of All Things, and himſelf the End of All Things; the true Religion muſt teach us to make him alone the Object of our Worſhip and our Love. But ſince we find ourſelves under an Inability as well of adoring

adoring him whom we know not, as of loving any Thing but ourſelves; the ſame Religion which enjoins us theſe Duties, ought alſo to acquaint us with this Inability, and to inſtruct us in its Cure.

AGAIN, in Order to the Accompliſhment of Man's Happineſs, it ought to convince us that there is a GOD; that we are obliged to love him; that our true Felicity conſiſts in our Dependance on him, and our only Evil and Misfortune in our Separation from him. It ought to inform us, that we are full of groſs Darkneſs, which hinders us from knowing and loving him; and that our Duty thus obliging us to love GOD, and our Concupiſcence turning our whole Affection upon ourſelves, we are notoriouſly unjuſt. It ought to diſcover to us the Cauſe of that Enmity and Oppoſition which we bear to GOD, and to our own Happineſs. It ought to teach us the Remedies of this Infirmity, and the Means of obtaining them. Let Men compare all the Religions of the World in theſe Reſpects, and let them obſerve whether any one but the Chriſtian is able to afford them Satisfaction.

SHALL it be the Religion of thoſe Philoſophers, who propoſed no other Good but what they would have us find in our own Perſons? Is this the true and ſovereign

reign Good? or have these Men discover'd the Remedy of our Evils? Was it a proper Method for the Cure of Man's Presumption, thus to equal him with GOD? On the other hand, have those succeeded better in restraining our earthly Desires, who would bring us down to the Level of Beasts, and present us with sensual Gratifications for our real and universal Happiness? "Lift up your Eyes to GOD, said "those of the former Tribe; behold him "who has stamp'd you with his Image, "and has made you for his Worship. You "have not only a Capacity of being like "him, but Wisdom, if you follow its "Directions, will even render you his "Peers." While those of the latter Herd cried, with no less Earnestness, "Cast down "your Eyes to the Ground, base Worms "as you are, and look on the Beasts, your "goodly Partners and Fellows." What then is to be the Fate of Man! shall he be equal to GOD? or shall he not be superior to the Beasts? How frightful, how shocking a Distance this! What shall we be then? What Religion shall instruct us to correct at once our Pride, and our Concupiscence? What Religion shall disclose to us our Happiness, and our Duty; together with the Infirmities which stop us in so desired a Course; the proper Help of these Infir-

mities, and the Means of obtaining this Help? Let us hear what Anſwer we receive upon the whole Enquiry, from the Wiſdom of GOD, ſpeaking to us in the Chriſtian Religion.

'TIS in vain, O Men, that you ſeek from yourſelves the Remedy of your Miſeries. All your Lights extend to no farther Diſcovery than this; that you cannot from your own Stores be ſupplied with Happineſs or Truth. The Philoſophers, who promiſed all Things, could perform nothing in your Behalf: They neither apprehended your true Eſtate, nor your real Good. What Poſſibility was there of your receiving Benefit from their Preſcriptions, who had not Skill enough to underſtand your Diſeaſe? Your chief Infirmities are Pride, which alienates you from GOD; and Concupiſcence, which faſtens you down to Earth; and their conſtant Employment was to careſs and entertain one or the other of theſe Diſorders. They who preſented GOD to you as the ſole Object of your Contemplation, did but gratify your Pride, by vainly inſinuating, that your Nature was conſtituted under a Parity with the Divine: And as for thoſe who ſaw the Extravagance of ſuch Pretenſions, what did they but ſet you upon the other Precipice, by tempting you to believe that your Nature was

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of a Piece with that of the Beaſts; and by inclining you to place all your Good in ſenſual Delight, the Portion of irrational Creatures? Theſe could never be the Means of diſcovering to you the Injuſtice of your Proceedings. Do not therefore expect Inſtruction or Conſolation from Men: It was I that firſt made you to be; and 'tis I alone which can teach you the Knowledge of your own Being. You are not now in the Eſtate under which you were form'd by my Hand: I created Man holy, innocent, and perfect: I repleniſh'd him with Light and Underſtanding: I communicated to him my Wonders and my Glory: Then it was that the Eye of Man beheld the Majeſty of GOD. He did not then labour under this Darkneſs which blinds him under this Mortality, and theſe Miſeries which afflict and oppreſs him: But he was unable to ſuſtain ſo great Degrees of Splendor, without falling into Preſumption: He was diſpoſed to make himſelf the Centre of his own Happineſs, and altogether independent from the divine Succours: And when he had withdrawn himſelf from my Dominion, and affected an Equality with me, by preſuming to find all his Happineſs in himſelf, I abandon'd him to his own Guidance; and cauſing a general Revolt amongſt the Creatures that were his Subjects, I made them

his

his Enemies. Man himſelf is now become like unto the Beaſts, and remov'd to ſuch a Diſtance from me, as ſcarce to retain ſome ſcatter'd Rays and confuſed Notices of his Author; ſo far have all his diſcerning Powers been either extinguiſh'd or diſturb'd: His Senſes being never the Servants, and very often the Maſters of his Reaſon, have driven him on the Purſuit of unwarrantable Pleaſures. All the Creatures with which he is ſurrounded, either grieve and torment, or tempt and ſeduce him; thus ever maintaining a Sovereignty over him, either as they ſubdue him by their Strength, or as they melt him with their Charms, which is the more imperious, and more fatal Tyranny.

* BEHOLD the preſent Eſtate and Condition of Men! On the one Hand, they are carried towards the Happineſs of their primitive Nature, by a powerful Inſtinct ſtill remaining within them; and on the other hand, they are plung'd in the Miſeries of their own Blindneſs and Concupiſcence, which is now become their ſecond Nature.

* FROM the Principles which I have here laid open to you, you may diſcern the Spring of thoſe wonderful Contrarieties, which, while they aſtoniſh all Men, do no leſs diſtract and divide them.

* OBSERVE again all the Movements of Greatneſs and Glory, which the Senſe of ſo many Miſeries is not able to extinguiſh, and conſider whether they can proceed from a leſs powerful Cauſe than original Nature.

* KNOW then, proud Mortal, what a Paradox thou art to thyſelf. Let thy weak Reaſon be humbled; let thy frail Nature compoſe itſelf in Silence: Learn that *Man* infinitely ſurpaſſeth *Man*; and let thy own Hiſtory, to which thou art thyſelf an utter Stranger, be declared to thee by thy Maker and thy Lord.

* FOR, in a Word, had Man never fallen into Corruption, he would proceed in the Enjoyment of Truth and Happineſs with an aſſur'd Delight; and had Man never known any other than this corrupted State, he would at preſent retain no Idea of Truth and Happineſs. But ſo great is our Miſery, (greater than if we had never taſted any Thing Lofty or Noble in our Condition,) that we preſerve an Idea of Happineſs, while we are unable to purſue it; that we diſcern ſome faint Image of Truth, while we poſſeſs nothing but Lyes, being alike incapable of abſolute Ignorance and of accompliſhed Knowledge. So manifeſt is it, that we once ſtood in a Degree of

of Perfection, from which we are now unhappily fallen.

* What then does this Eagerneſs in coveting, and this Impotence in acquiring teach us? but that Man was originally poſſeſſed of a real Bliſs, of which nothing now remains but the Footſteps and empty Traces; which he vainly endeavours to repleniſh with all the Abundance that ſurrounds him, ſeeking, from abſent Enjoyments, the Relief which he finds not in ſuch as are preſent, and which neither the Preſent nor the Abſent can beſtow on him; becauſe this great Gulph, this infinite Vacuity is only to be fill'd up by an Object infinite and immovable?

* It is moſt aſtoniſhing to reflect, that of all Myſteries, that which ſeems to be fartheſt remov'd from our Diſcovery and Apprehenſion, I mean the Tranſmiſſion of original Sin, ſhould yet be ſo neceſſary a Point of Knowledge, as that without it, we muſt remain utter Strangers to ourſelves. For 'tis beyond Doubt that nothing appears ſo ſhocking to our Reaſon, as that the Tranſgreſſion of the firſt Man ſhould derive a Guilt on thoſe who, being ſo vaſtly diſtant from the Fountain, ſeem incapable of ſharing in the impure Tincture. This Transfuſion is look'd upon by us not only as impoſſible, but as unjuſt, could we

ſuppoſe it to be poſſible: For what can be more repugnant to the Rules of our miſerable Juſtice, than to doom to eternal Ruin an Infant without Will or Choice, for an Offence, which ſhews ſo little Probability of affecting him as to have been committed ſix thouſand Years before his Exiſtence in the World? Certainly nothing ſtrikes our Judgment with more Harſhneſs and Violence than ſuch a Doctrine. And yet without this incomprehenſible Myſtery, we are ourſelves incomprehenſible to our own Mind. The Clue which knits together our whole Fortune and Condition, takes its Turns, and plies in this amazing Abyſs; in ſo much that Man will appear no leſs unconceivable without this Myſtery, than this Myſtery appears unconceivable to Man.

* ORIGINAL Sin, is *Fooliſhneſs to Men.* 'Tis granted to be ſo: Wherefore Reaſon ought not to be accuſed as defective in this Knowledge; becauſe it pretends not to be ſuch as Reaſon can ever fathom. But then this *Fooliſhneſs* is wiſer than all the *Wiſdom* of Men, *quod ſtultum eſt Dei ſapientius eſt hominibus:* For without this how would it be poſſible to ſay what Man is? His whole Eſtate depends on this one imperceptible Point. Yet how ſhould he be made acquainted with this by his Reaſon,

when

when it is a Thing above his Reaſon, and when Reaſon, inſtead of introducing him to it, carries him the farther from it, the more it is employ'd in the Search ?

* THESE two oppoſite States of Innocence and of Corruption, being preſented to our View, we cannot but perceive the Difference, and applaud the Diſcovery.

* LET us follow our own Motions, and obſerve ourſelves; and let us ſee whether we may not trace out the lively Characters of theſe different Natures.

* How ſurprizing is it, that ſo numerous Contradictions ſhould be found in one and the ſame Subject ?

* THIS double Temper and Diſpoſition of Man is ſo viſible, that there have not been wanting thoſe who imagined him to have two Souls; one ſingle Subject appearing to them incapable of ſo great and ſudden Variety, from an unmeaſurable Preſumption to a dreadful Abaſement and Abjectneſs of Spirit.

* THUS the ſeveral Contrarieties which, in Appearance, ſhould moſt alienate Men from the Knowledge of all Religion, are thoſe very Things which ſhould, indeed, moſt effectually conduct them to the true.

FOR my own Part, I cannot but declare, that ſo ſoon as the *Chriſtian* Religion diſ-

covers to me this one Principle, that Human Nature is depravʼd, and fallen from GOD, this clears up my Sight, and enables me to diſtinguiſh throughout the Characters of ſo divine a Myſtery. For ſuch is the whole Frame and Diſpoſition of Nature, as, in all Things within and without us, to beſpeak the Loſs of GOD's more immediate Preſence, and more favourable Communications.

WITHOUT this Divine Information, what would be left for Men to do, but either immoderately to exalt themſelves, by the remaining Senſe of their former Grandeur, or no leſs immoderately to abaſe themſelves, by reflecting on their preſent Infirmity? For not being in a Capacity of abſolute Truth, 'tis impoſſible they ſhould arrive at perfect Virtue: Some looking on Nature as indefectible, others as irrecoverable, they muſt of Neceſſity fall either into Vanity or Idleneſs, the two great Sources of all Vice. For they could not but either abandon themſelves through Negligence, or cure their Negligence by flattering their Pride. If they knew the Excellency of Man, they would be ignorant of his Corruption, ſo as eaſily to eſcape the Danger of Remiſſneſs and Sloth; but, at the ſame Time, to loſe themſelves in haughty Conceit. Or, if they were ſenſible of the

Infir-

Infirmity of Nature, they ſhould be Strangers to its Dignity, ſo as eaſily to refrain from being tranſported with Preſumption; but, at the ſame Time, to plunge themſelves into Deſpair.

HENCE aroſe the various Sects of the *Stoics* and *Epicureans*, of the *Dogmatiſts* and the *Academics*, *&c.* It is the Chriſtian Religion alone, which has been able throughly to cure theſe oppoſite Diſtempers; not ſo as to drive the one out by the other, according to the Wiſdom of the World; but ſo as to expel them both by the Simplicity of the Goſpel. For while it exalts the Good and Pious even to a Participation of the Divinity itſelf, it lets them underſtand, that, in this their ſublime Eſtate, they ſtill retain the Fountain of all Corruption, which renders them, during their whole Life, ſubject to Error and Miſery, to Death and Sin. And at the ſame Time it aſſures the moſt Impious, that they are not yet incapable of ſharing the Grace and Bleſſing of a Redeemer. Thus ſpeaking, not without Terror to thoſe whom it juſtifies, nor without Comfort to thoſe whom it condemns, it ſo wiſely tempers Hope and Fear, in regard to this double Capacity of Sin and of Grace, which is common to all Mankind, that it abaſeth infinitely more than unaſſiſted Reaſon, yet without Deſpair, and exalts in-

finitely more than natural Pride, yet without puffing up: Hereby demonſtrating, that being alone exempt from Error and Vice, it can alone challenge the Office of inſtructing and of reforming Men.

* THE *Chriſtian* Faith is moſt ſurpriſing in its Meaſures. It enjoins Man to acknowledge himſelf vile, and even abominable, and obliges him, at the ſame Time, to aſpire towards a Reſemblance of his Maker. Were not Things thus exactly balanced, either ſuch an Exaltation would render him extravagantly vain, or ſuch a Debaſement would render him horribly abject and diſpirited.

* THE Myſtery of the *Incarnation* diſcovers to Man the Greatneſs of his Danger, by the Greatneſs of thoſe Methods which he ſtood in need of for his Relief.

* WE find not in the *Chriſtian* Religion, either ſuch a State of Humiliation as renders us incapable of Good, nor ſuch a State of Holineſs as is perfectly exempt from Evil.

* No Doctrine is ſo juſtly ſuited to the Condition and to the Temper of Man as this; which makes him acquainted with his double Capacity of receiving and forfeiting Grace, as a Fence againſt the double Danger to which

which he is always expoſed, of Deſpair and of Pride.

* THE Philoſophers never furniſhed Men with Sentiments agreeable to theſe two Eſtates. They either inſpired a Principle of pure Grandeur, and this cannot be the true Condition of Man, or elſe of mere Abjectneſs; and this Condition is as ill proportioned as the former. We ought to preſerve a Senſe of Humiliation; yet not as the Character of our Nature, but as the Effect of our Repentance; not ſuch as ſhould fix us in Deſparation, but ſuch as ſhould diſpoſe and lead us on to Greatneſs. Nor ought we to be leſs affected with the Motions of Grandeur; yet of ſuch as proceeds from Grace, not from Merit, and ſuch as we arrive at by the Diſcipline of Humiliation.

* No Man is ſo Happy as the true *Chriſtian*; none ſo is Rational, ſo Virtuous, ſo Amiable. With how little Vanity does ſuch an one reflect on himſelf as united to God? With how little Abjectneſs does he rank himſelf with the Worms of the Earth?

* WHO then can withhold his Belief or Adoration, from ſo Divine a Guidance and Light? For is it not clearer than the Day, that we ſee and feel within ourſelves indelible Characters of Excellence? And is it not

not full as clear, that we experience every Moment the Effects of deplorable Baſeneſs? What, elſe therefore, does this *Chaos*, this monſtrous Confuſion in our Nature, but proclaim the Truth of theſe two Eſtates, and that with a Voice ſo powerful, as is always to be heard, and never to be reſiſted?

IV.

It is by no Means incredible that GOD *ſhould unite Himſelf to* us.

THAT which renders Men ſo averſe to believing themſelves capable of an Union with GOD, is nothing elſe but the Thought of their own Baſeneſs and Miſery: Yet if this Thought of theirs be ſincere, let them purſue it as far as I have done, and let them confeſs our Baſeneſs to have only this Effect, with Reſpect to GOD, that it hinders us from diſcovering by our own Strength whether his Mercy cannot render us capable of an Union with him. For I would gladly be informed, whence this Creature, which acknowledgeth himſelf ſo weak and contemptible, ſhould obtain a Right

Right of ſetting Bounds to the divine Mercy, and of meaſuring it by ſuch a Rule and Standard as his own Fancy ſuggeſts. Man knows ſo little of the divine Eſſence, as to remain ignorant of what he is himſelf; and yet, diſturb'd at this imperfect View of his own Condition, he boldly pronounceth, that 'tis beyond the Power of GOD to qualify him for ſo ſublime a Conjunction. But I will ask him, whether GOD requires any Thing elſe at his Hands, but that he ſhould know him, and ſhould love him; and, ſince he finds himſelf in his own Nature capable of knowing and of loving, upon what Ground he ſuſpects that the divine Nature cannot exhibit itſelf, as the Object of his Knowledge and his Love. For as he certainly knows, at leaſt, that he is ſomewhat, ſo he no leſs certainly loves ſomewhat. If then he *ſees* any Thing under the preſent Darkneſs of his Underſtanding, and if amongſt the Things of this World, he can find ſomewhat which may engage his Affection, ſhould GOD be pleaſed to impart to him ſome Ray of his Eſſence, why ſhould he not be able to know and to love his divine Benefactor, according to the Meaſure and Proportion in which this Honour was vouchſafed? There muſt therefore, no doubt, be an intolerable Preſumption in theſe Ways of Reaſoning, tho' veil'd

veil'd under an Appearance of Humility. For our Humility can neither be rational nor ſincere, unleſs it makes us confeſs, that not knowing of ourſelves even what we ourſelves are, we cannot otherwiſe be inſtructed in our own Condition, than by the Aſſiſtance and Information of Heaven.

V.

The Submiſſion and Uſe of Reaſon.

THE laſt Proceſs of Reaſon is to diſcover, that there's an Infinity of Things which utterly ſurpaſs its Force. And it muſt be very weak if it arrive not at this Diſcovery.

* 'Tis fit we ſhould know, how to doubt where we ought, to reſt aſſured where we ought, to ſubmit where we ought. He who fails in any one of theſe Reſpects is unacquainted with the Power of Reaſon. Yet are there many which offend againſt theſe three Rules; either by warranting every Thing for Demonſtration, becauſe they are unskill'd in the Nature of demonſtrative Evidence, or by doubting of every Thing, becauſe they know not where they ought

ought to ſubmit; or by ſubmitting to every Thing, becauſe they know not where to uſe their Judgment.

* IF we bring down all Things to Reaſon, our Religion will have nothing in it myſterious or ſupernatural. If we ſtifle the Principles of Reaſon, our Religion will be abſurd and ridiculous.

* REASON, ſays St. *Auſtin*, would never be for ſubmitting, if it did not judge that on ſome Occaſions, Submiſſion was its Duty. 'Tis but juſt therefore, that it ſhould recede where it ſees an Obligation of receding; and that it ſhould aſſert its Privileges, where, upon good Grounds, it ſuppoſeth itſelf not engaged to wave them.

* *SUPERSTITION* and true *Piety* are Things which ſtand at the greateſt Diſtance from each other. To carry Piety to the extravagant Heights of Superſtition, is indeed to deſtroy it. Heretical Men are wont to reproach us with this ſuperſtitious Submiſſion of our Faculties. And we ſhould be guilty of the Charge, if we required Men to ſubmit in Things which are not the proper Matter of Submiſſion.

NOTHING is ſo agreeable to Reaſon, as the diſclaiming of Reaſon in Matters of pure Faith: And nothing is ſo repugnant to Reaſon as the Diſuſe of Reaſon in Things that do not concern Faith: The Extremes

are

are equally dangerous, either wholly to exclude Reaſon, or to admit nothing but Reaſon.

* FAITH ſays many Things in which the Senſes are ſilent; but nothing which the Senſes deny: It is always above them, but never contrary to them.

VI.

Faith without Reaſoning.

MIGHT we but ſee a Miracle, ſay ſome Men, how gladly would we become Converts? They could not ſpeak in this Manner, did they underſtand what Converſion means: They imagine, that nothing elſe is requiſite to this Work, but the bare Acknowledgment of GOD; and that his Adoration and Service conſiſts only in the paying him certain verbal Addreſſes, little different from thoſe which the Heathens uſed towards their Idols. True Converſion is to abaſe, and, as it were, to annihilate ourſelves, before this Great and Sovereign Being, whom we have ſo often

provoked, and who every Moment may, without the leaſt Injuſtice, deſtroy us: 'Tis to acknowledge, that we can do nothing without his Aid, and that we have merited nothing from him but his Wrath: 'Tis to know that there's an invincible Oppoſition between GOD and ourſelves; and that without the Benefit of a Mediator, there could be no Tranſaction or Intercourſe between us.

NEVER think it ſtrange that illiterate Perſons ſhould believe without Reaſoning. GOD inſpires them with the Love of his Juſtice, and with the Hatred of themſelves. 'Tis he that inclines their Hearts to believe. No Man ever believes with a true and ſaving Faith, unleſs GOD inclines his Heart: And no Man, when GOD inclines his Heart, can refrain from thus believing. Of this *David* was ſenſible when he pray'd, *Inclina cor meum, Deus, in teſtimonia tua.*

* THAT ſome Men believe without having examin'd the Proofs of Religion is, becauſe they enjoy a Temper and Frame of Mind altogether Pious and Holy; and becauſe what they hear affirm'd by our Religion is agreeable to ſuch a Temper.

THEY are ſenſible that one GOD is their Maker: They are inclined to love nothing but him, and to hate nothing but themſelves. They are ſenſible of their own Weakneſs

Weakneſs and Impotence, that they are of themſelves utterly incapable of coming to GOD, and that, unleſs he is pleas'd mercifully to come to them, 'tis impoſſible they ſhould maintain any Communication with him. And they hear our Religion declaring, that GOD alone ought to be the Object of our Affection, and Ourſelves alone of our Deteſtation: And that whereas we are by Nature corrupt, and under an Incapacity of uniting ourſelves to GOD, GOD has been pleaſed to become Man, that he might unite himſelf to us. There needs no more to perſuade Men, than this Diſpoſition of Heart, together with this Apprehenſion of their Duty, and of their Incapacity for its Diſcharge.

* THOSE whom we ſee commencing real *Chriſtians*, without the Knowledge of Prophecies, or of the like Evidences, do yet judge of their Religion no leſs than the Maſters of that Knowledge. They judge of it by the Heart, as others judge by the Underſtanding. GOD inclines their Heart to Faith, and his Grace is the moſt effectual Conviction.

I confeſs, one of theſe Chriſtians who believes without the common Methods of Proof, is not qualified to convince an Infidel, who pretends to want nothing but Proof. But thoſe who are skill'd in the Evidences

Evidences of Religion can with Eaſe demonſtrate that ſuch a Believer does truly receive his Faith from the Inſpiration of GOD, tho' he is unable to prove even this of himſelf.

VII.

That there is more Advantage in believing, than in disbelieving the Doctrines of Chriſtianity

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE main Part of this Chapter is addreſs'd purely to certain Perſons, who not being ſatisfied with the Proofs of Religion, and much leſs with the Reaſons of Atheiſm, remain in a State of Suſpenſe between Faith and Infidelity. The Author pretends only to ſhew theſe Men, by their own Principles, and by the bare Light of Reaſon, that 'tis plainly their Intereſt to believe; and that this is the Side which they ought to take, ſuppoſing them to be allow'd their Option. Whence it follows, that till they have obtain'd ſufficient Light

to guide them to the Truth, they are, in the mean Time, at leaſt obliged to do every Thing which may diſpoſe them for it, and to diſengage themſelves from all thoſe Impediments which may obſtruct its Reception; ſuch as are eſpecially the Paſſions and the vain Amuſements of Life.

UNITY join'd to Infinity increaſes it not, any more than a Foot-meaſure added to an infinite Space. What is Finite, vaniſhes before that which is Infinite, and becomes pure nothing. Thus our Underſtanding, in reſpect of GOD's; thus Human Juſtice compared with the Divine.

NAY, the Diſproportion between Unity and Infinity, in general, is not ſo vaſt as that between Man's Righteouſneſs, and the Righteouſneſs of GOD.

* WE know that there is an Infinite; but we are ignorant of its Nature. For inſtance; we know it to be falſe, that Numbers are finite: There muſt, therefore, be an Infinity in Number. But what this is we know not? It can neither be equal or unequal, becauſe Unity added to it, varies not its Condition. Thus we may very well know that there is a GOD, without comprehending what GOD is; and you ought by no Means to conclude againſt the Exiſtence of

GOD

GOD from your imperfect Conceptions of his Eſſence.

FOR your Conviction, I ſhall not call in the Teſtimony of Faith, which gives us ſo certain an Aſſurance; nor even make uſe of the ordinary Proofs, becauſe theſe you are unwilling to receive. I ſhall argue with you only upon your own Terms; and I doubt not but, from the Method in which you reaſon every Day concerning Things of the ſmalleſt Importance, to make it appear, after what Manner you ought to reaſon in the preſent Caſe, and to which Side you ought to incline, in deciding this Queſtion of the higheſt Conſequence, about the Exiſtence of GOD. You alledge then that we are incapable of knowing whether GOD is. Yet this remains certain, that either GOD is, or is not; and that there can be no Medium in the Caſe. Which Part then ſhall we chuſe? Reaſon, ſay you, is not a proper Judge in this Point. There's an infinite Gulph, or Chaos, fix'd between us: We play, as it were, at *Croſs and Pile*, for an Uncertainty thus infinitely diſtant. What will you wager? Reaſon can affirm neither the one nor the other Event: Reaſon can deny neither the one nor the other.

DON'T be forward, then, in accuſing thoſe of Error and Falſity who have already

choſe their Side. For you confeſs yourſelf not to know whether they have indeed acted imprudently, and made an ill Choiſe. No, you will ſay, but I ſhall take the Freedom to cenſure them ſtill, not for making this Choice, but for making any: He that that take *Croſs*, and he that takes *Pile*, are both in the Wrong; the Right had been not to wager at all.

NAY, but there's a Neceſſity of wagering; the Thing is placed beyond the Indifference of your Will; you are embarked in the Cauſe; and by not laying that God is, you, in effect, lay that he is not. Which will you take: Let us balance the Gain and the Loſs of ſticking to the Affirmative. If you gain, you gain all; if you loſe, it is mere nothing that's loſt. Be quick, therefore, and take this Side without Demur. Well, I confeſs, I ought to lay; but may not I lay too much? Suppoſing the Chance to be the ſame, you would not refuſe to ſtake one Life againſt two. And in caſe there were ten for you to win, you muſt be much more imprudent not to hazard one Life againſt ten, at a Game where the Caſt was even. But here there's an infinite Number of Lives infinitely happy to be won, upon an equal Throw; and the Stake you venture is ſo petty a Thing, and of ſo very ſhort Continuance, that it would

be

be ridiculous for you to ſhew your good Husbandry on this Occaſion. For you ſay nothing, when you urge that 'tis uncertain whether you win, and that 'tis certain you muſt venture; and that the infinite Diſtance between the Certainty of venturing, and the Uncertainty of winning, makes the Finite good, which you certainly expoſe equal to the Infinite, which you uncertainly purſue. This is all Deception: Every Gameſter ſtakes what is certain againſt what is uncertain; and yet his venturing a finite Certainty for a finite Uncertainty, never diſparages his Reaſon. Again, its falſe that there's an infinite Diſtance between the *Certainty* of what we venture, and the *Uncertainty* of what we hope to win. Indeed the *Certainty* of winning, and the *Certainty* of loſing are infinitely diſtant. But as for the *Uncertainty* on the winning Hand, it is ſuch as fairly balanceth the *Certainty* of what we venture, according to the uſual Proportion in Games of Chance. Suppoſe, therefore, there are as many Chances on one Side, as on the other, the Game is even; and thus the Certainty of our Venture is but equal to the Uncertainty of our Prize: So far ought we to be from ſuppoſing an infinite Diſtance between them. So that, on the whole, if we ſtake a Finite, where there's a plain Equality as

to Winning or Loſing; and where that which may be won is infinite, the Argument cannot but be of infinite Force. We ſeem here to have a Demonſtration before us; and if Men are not incapable of all Truth, they cannot remain inſenſible of this.

I OWN, and confeſs it; but ſtill might there not be ſome Means of ſeeing a little clearer into this Matter? Yes, this is to be done by the Help of Scripture, and by the other infinite Proofs of Religion.

O, ſay you, Men who may entertain the Hope of Salvation are very happy in this Reſpect; but is not the Fear of Hell a very unfortunate Counterpoize?

WHICH, I beſeech you, has moſt Cauſe to be afraid of Hell; one that is under Ignorance whether there be a Hell or not, and under certain Damnation if there be; or another who is certainly perſuaded that there is a Hell, but is encouraged to hope that he ſhall be deliver'd from having his Part in it?

A MAN who is reſpited (ſuppoſe for eight Days) from the Sentence of Death, ſhould he not be inclined to think that there is ſomewhat more in all this than a mere Hit of Chance, muſt have utterly abandon'd his Senſes. But now were we not miſe-

miſerably enſlaved by our Paſſions, eight Days and an hundred Years would, upon this View, appear the ſame Thing.

WHAT Damage are you like to ſuſtain by embracing the Affirmative? Why, you are engaged by this Principle, to be faithful, Honeſt, Humble, Grateful, Beneficent, Hearty, and Sincere. It is true, you will not bed in Poſſeſſion of baſe and infamous Pleaſure, of fading Glory, of empty Delight. But is not their Room to be ſupplied by more deſirable Enjoyments? I tell you, you'll be a Gainer, even in this Life; and every Step you take in the Way to which you are now directed, you will diſcover ſo much Certainty of a future Advantage, and ſo much Emptineſs, and mere Nullity in what you hazard, as at length to find that you have traffick'd for a ſure and infinite Reverſion, and yet, in effect, have given nothing for the Purchaſe.

BUT, you ſay, you are ſo made as to be incapable of believing: At leaſt, therefore, endeavour to underſtand this your Incapacity; and to find what it is that debars you of Faith, when Reaſon ſo manifeſtly invites you to it. Labour then, in your own Conviction, not by increaſing the Proofs of a Deity, but by diminiſhing the Power of your Paſſions. You are willing to be

brought to Faith, but you know not the Way: You would be cured of your Infidelity, and you desire to be informed of the proper Remedies: Learn them from those who were once in you Condition, but are at present clear from all Scruple and Doubt. They are acquainted with the Path which you would gladly find; They have recovered from a Disease which you wish to overcome. Observe the Method with which they began their Cure: Imitate their external Actions, if you are, as yet, unable to transcribe their inward Dispositions: Banish those Amusements which have hitherto entirely possess'd you.

O! I should soon bid Adieu to these Pleasures, say you, were I once but Master of Faith. And, I say, on the other hand, you would soon be Master of Faith, had you once bidden Adieu to these Pleasures. 'Tis your Part to begin. Were it in my Power, I would oblige you with the Gift of Faith. This I am unable to do, and consequently to make out the Truth of what you suppose: But you may easily abandon your Pleasures; and, by consequence, evince the Certainty of what I affirm.

* WE must not mistake our own Nature, we are Body as well as Spirit; and hence it comes to pass, that the Instrument by which Persuasion conveys itself to us, is not

not Demonſtration only. How few Things do we ſee demonſtrated? Rational Proof and Evidence acts immediately on the Mind; but Cuſtom is the ſtrongeſt Argument: This engages the Senſes, and they incline the Underſtanding, without giving it Time for Thought. Who has ever yet demonſtrated the Certainty of To-morrow's Light, or of our own Deaths? And yet what is more univerſally believed than both? 'Tis Cuſtom, therefore, which has confirm'd us in this Judgment; 'tis Cuſtom which makes ſo many Artiſans, Soldiers, *&c.* I confeſs we ought not to begin with this in the Search of Truth; yet we ought to have Recourſe to it, when we have once diſcovered where Truth is, to refreſh and invigorate our Belief which decays every Moment; for that the regular Method and Train of Arguments ſhould be always preſent to our Minds, the Buſineſs of Life will not permit. We ought to acquire a more eaſy Principle, ſuch as is the Habit of believing, which, without Violence, without Art, without Argument, recommends Things to our Aſſent; and, by ſome ſecret Charm, ſo inclines all our Powers towards any Perſuaſion, as that we naturally fall into it. To be ready to believe any Doctrine, upon the Force of Conviction, is not ſufficient, when our Senſes ſolicite us to embrace the

oppoſite

oppoſite Side. Theſe two Parts of ourſelves ſhould be ſo regulated, as always to proceed in Concert; the Underſtanding by ſuch Arguments and Evidences as 'tis ſufficient to have once attain'd in our whole Life; the Senſes by Cuſtom, and by our not ſuffering them to take a contrary Biaſs.

VIII.

The Pourtraict of a Man who has wearied himſelf with ſearching after GOD by his bare Reaſon, and who begins to read the Scripture.

WHEN I conſider the Blindneſs and Miſery of Man, and thoſe amazing Contrarieties which diſcover themſelves in his Nature; when I obſerve the whole Creation to be ſilent, and Man to be without Comfort, abandon'd to himſelf, and, as it were, ſtray'd into this Corner of the Univerſe, neither apprehending by whoſe Means he came hither, nor what is the End of his coming, nor what will befall him at his Departure hence; I am ſtruck with the ſame Horror as a Perſon who has been carried

ried in his Sleep into a deſolate and frightful Iſland, and who awakes without knowing where he is, or by what Way he may get out and eſcape. And, upon this View, I am at a Loſs to conceive how ſo miſerable an Eſtate can produce any Thing but Deſpair. I behold other Perſons near me, of the ſame Nature and Conſtitution: I ask if they are any better inform'd than myſelf; and they aſſure me they are not. Immediately after which, I take notice that theſe unfortunate Wanderers having look'd about them, and eſpied certain Objects of Pleaſure, are contented to ſeek no farther; but ſwallow the Bait, embrace the Charm, and faſten themſelves down to the Enjoyment. For my own Part, I can obtain no Satisfaction or Repoſe in the Society of Perſons like myſelf, labouring under the ſame Weakneſs, and the ſame Diſtreſs. I find they will be able to give me no Aſſiſtance at my Death: I ſhall be obliged to die alone; and therefore I ought to proceed, in this Reſpect, as if I liv'd alone. Now in a Condition of Solitude, I would entertain no Projects of Building; I would perplex myſelf with none of the tumultuary Affairs of Life; I would court the Eſteem of no Perſon; but would devote myſelf and my Pains to the Diſcovery of Truth.

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HENCE reflecting how probable it ſeems that there may be ſomething elſe beſides that which now preſents itſelf to my Eye, I begin to examine, whether that ſupreme and divine Being, which is ſo much talk'd of by all the World, has been pleas'd to leave any Marks or Footſteps of himſelf. I look round on all Sides, and ſee nothing throughout but univerſal Obſcurity. Nature offers no Conſideration, but what is the Subject of Doubt and Diſquiet. Could I no where diſcern the leaſt Token of Divinity, I would reſolve not to believe at all: Could I in every Thing trace the Image of a Creator, I would reſt myſelf upon a ſure and ſettled Belief. But while I ſee too much to deny, and too little to affirm the Queſtion with any Certainty, my Condition renders me an Object of Pity; and I have a thouſand Times wiſh'd, that if Nature have indeed a divine Author and Supporter, ſhe would preſent us with the lively Draught and unconteſted Characters of his Being: But, if the Marks which ſhe bears about her are fallacious, ſhe would entirely conceal him from our View; that ſhe would either ſay All, or ſay Nothing; ſo as to determine my Judgment on either Side. Whereas, under my preſent Suſpence, being ignorant as well of what I am, as of that which is expected from me,

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I remain an equal Stranger to my Condition and my Duty. In the mean Time my Heart is abſolutely bent on the Search of real and ſolid Good, ſuch as, when found, may complete my Hopes, and regulate my Conduct. I ſhould think no Price too dear for this Acquiſition.

I obſerve a Multitude of Religions in all Countries and Times. But they are ſuch as neither pleaſe me with their Morals, nor move me with their Proofs. Thus, I would, without Diſtinction, at once reject the Religion of *Mahomet*, or of the *Chineſe*, of ancient *Egypt*, or *Rome*, upon this ſingle Reaſon, becauſe neither of them being able to produce more Signs of Truth than another, neither of them affording any Thing to incline and fix our Thought, Reaſon cannot ſhew a greater Propenſion to one Mode than to any of the reſt.

BUT while I am making Reflexions on this ſtrange and unaccountable Variety of Manners and of Belief in different Countries and Periods, I find in one little Corner of the World a peculiar People ſeparated from all the Nations under Heaven, whoſe Regiſters exceed, by many Ages, the moſt antient Stories now on Record. I diſcover a great and numerous Race, who worſhip one GOD, and are govern'd by a Law which they affirm themſelves to have received

receiv'd from his Hand. The Sum of what they maintain is this; That they are the only Perſons whom GOD has honour'd with the Communication of his Myſteries; that all other Men, having corrupted themſelves, and merited the divine Diſpleaſure, are abandon'd to their own Senſe and Imagination; whence ariſe the endleſs Wanderings and continual Alterations amongſt them, whether in Religion, or in Civil Diſcipline; while their Nation alone has preſerv'd an immoveable Eſtabliſhment: But, that GOD will not for ever leave the reſt of the World under ſo miſerable Darkneſs; that a common Saviour ſhall at length arrive; that the ſole End of their Polity is to prefigure and proclaim his Arrival; that they were form'd and conſtituted with expreſs Deſign to be the Heralds of his great Appearance, and to give Warning to all Nations that they ſhould unite in the bleſſed Expectation of a Redeemer.

MY Adventure amongſt this People, as it gives me the greateſt Surprize, ſo it ſeems to me deſerve the higheſt Regard and Attention, on Account of the many wonderful and ſingular Curioſities diſcoverable in their Frame.

THEY are a People compoſed entirely of Brethren: And whereas all others have been conſtituted by an Aſſemblage of almoſt

moſt infinite Races and Bloods, theſe, tho' ſo prodigiouſly fruitful, have deſcended all from the ſame Man; whence, being as one one Fleſh, and as Members one of another, they form the moſt compacted Strength of one undivided Family. This is moſt peculiar and diſtinguiſhing.

THEY are the moſt ancient People that fall under our Knowledge and Diſcovery; a Circumſtance, which, in my Judgment, ought to procure them a very particular Veneration, eſpecially in regard to our preſent Enquiry; becauſe if GOD has at any Time vouchſafed to reveal himſelf to Mankind, theſe are the Perſons from whoſe Hands we are to receive the Tradition.

NOR are they only conſiderable in Point of Antiquity, but no leſs ſingular in their Duration, from their Original to this Day. For while the ſeveral People of *Greece*, of *Italy*, of *Sparta*, of *Athens*, and of *Rome*, together with others which ſprung up long after them, have been extinct many Ages, theſe have always ſubſiſted, and, in ſpight of the various Deſigns of many great and powerful Princes, who have a thouſand Times attempted their Deſtruction, (as Hiſtorians teſtify, and as it is natural to infer, from the ordinary Changes and Revolutions of Things,) have maintain'd themſelves during ſo vaſt a Courſe of Years, and,

and, ſtretching themſelves from the earlieſt to the lateſt Memory, have caus'd the Annals of their own Nation to be co-extended with the Hiſtory of the World.

THE Law by which this People is govern'd appears, in all Reſpects, to be the moſt ancient and moſt perfect that has obtain'd amongſt Men, and the only one which was able to endure without Change or Interruption in a State, as *Philo* the *Jew* has demonſtrated on many Occaſions, and *Joſephus* moſt admirably in his Diſcourſe againſt *Appion*, where the ſame excellent Author obſerves it to have ſtood ſo high in reſpect of Antiquity, as that the very Name of *Law* was not known in other Countries till a thouſand Years after, inſomuch, that *Homer*, though obliged to ſpeak of ſo many different Nations, has not once uſed the Word. And as to the Perfection of this Law, we may eaſily make an Eſtimate of it, from the bare Reading; by which we ſhall diſcern it to have diſpoſed all Things with ſo much Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Equity, that 'tis no Wonder the fam'd Legiſlators of *Greece* and *Rome* ſhould borrow thence their principal Inſtitutions, as we find they did by the Laws of the *twelve Tables*, and by other Evidences which *Joſephus* has produced at large.

YET this Law is, at the ſame Time, ſevere and rigorous beyond all others, obliging its Votaries, the better to ſecure them in their Duty, to a thouſand peculiar and painful Obſervances, under a capital Penalty: Whence we cannot, without Aſtoniſhment, reflect, that it ſhould for ſo many Ages be preſerved inviolable, amongſt a rebellious and impatient People, ſuch as we know the *Jews* to have been; while all other States have, from Time to Time, changed the Body of their Laws, though (on the contrary) mild and gentle, and eaſy to be obey'd.

THE ſame People are ſtill no leſs to be admired for their great Sincerity: They preſerve, with the utmoſt Faithfulneſs and Zeal, the very Book in which *Moſes* has left it recorded, that they were ever ſtubborn and ungrateful towards GOD, and that he foreſaw they would be more perverſe after his Death; that he, therefore, calls Heaven and Earth to witneſs againſt them, as to the Sufficiency of the Warning which he had given them; that finally, GOD being incenſed by their Tranſgreſſions, ſhould ſcatter them thro' all Lands; and, as they had *provoked him to Jealouſy by ſerving Gods which were no Gods*, he alſo ſhould *provoke them*, by calling *a People which were not a People.*

To conclude: I find no Reaſon to ſuſpect the Authority of the Book which relates all theſe Particulars: For there's the vaſteſt Difference imaginable between a Book compos'd by a private Hand, and diſperſed amongſt a whole People, and a Book of which the People themſelves ſeem to be the Joint-Authors, as well as the common Subject. In this Caſe the Antiquity of the Book and of the People is confeſſedly the ſame.

'Tis no inconſiderable Recommendation of theſe Writings, that they were compoſed by Authors contemporary to the Facts which they record. All Hiſtories compiled by Perſons not equal in Age to the Actions deſcribed, are ſuſpicious; as the Books of the *Sybils* of *Hermes Triſmegiſtus*, and many others, which having for a while paſs'd with Credit in the World, have been detected as Forgeries by ſucceeding Times. Contemporary Authors are neither capable of this Fraud, nor liable to this Cenſure.

IX.

The Injuſtice and Corruption of Man.

MAN is viſibly made for Thinking: This is all the Merit which he boaſts, and all the Glory to which he aſpires. To think as we ought, is the Sum of human Duty; and the true Art of Thinking, is to begin with ourſelves, our Author, and our End: And yet what is that which engroſſes the Thoughts of the whole World? Not one of theſe Objects; but the Purſuit of Pleaſure, the Improvement of Wealth, the Encreaſe of Honour and Eſteem; in fine, the making ourſelves Kings, without reflecting what it is to be a King, or to be a Man.

* HUMAN Thought is a Thing naturally excellent and noble: It muſt have prodigious Defaults, e'er it can be expoſed to Contempt; and yet ſuch it has, that nothing is indeed more ridiculous. How great does it appear in its genuine Nature! how little under its Corruption and Abuſe!

* IF we believe a GOD, the Duty of loving *him*, and not the *Creatures*, will be

neceſſarily inferr'd. The Reaſoning of thoſe profane *Epicures*, deſcribed in the Book of *Wiſdom*, was grounded on the Denial of GOD's Exiſtence. Upon this Hypotheſis they reſolved to take their Fill of the Creatures: But had they known the Falſeneſs of their Principle, they would have concluded the quite contrary. And this is the Concluſion of the Wiſe and the Good: There is a God; the Creatures, therefore, ought not to engage our Study, or attract our Deſire. Every Thing which incites to an Union with the Creatures is evil, becauſe it either hinders us from ſerving GOD, if we already know him, or from ſeeking him if as yet we know him not. But now we find ourſelves to be full of theſe Incitements, and to be wholly made up of Concupiſcence. We are therefore full of Evil; and if ſo, we ought to hate and deteſt ourſelves, together with all that which allures or endears us to any Thing but to GOD alone.

* IF at any Time we endeavour to fix our Thought and Attention upon GOD, how many Things do we feel which divert us from him, and which tempts us to muſe of other Subjects? All this cometh of Evil; but of ſuch Evil as we have the Misfortune to bring with us into the World.

* 'TIS

* 'TIS utterly falſe that we deſerve the Eſteem or Affection of Men; and 'tis Injuſtice ſo eagerly to covet it. Were we born Maſters of Reaſon, and with ſome Knowledge of ourſelves, we ſhould not entertain ſuch a Deſire. And yet this very Deſire accompanies our Birth. From our very Birth, therefore, we are unjuſt; while every one of us ſets up himſelf as the great Mark of all that he acts or thinks. This is contrary to the Order of Nature. Our Inclinations ought to ſtand towards the Publick: And this Biaſs towards ourſelves, is the firſt Spring of all Diſorder, in War, in Politicks, in OEconomicks, *&c.*

* As there ought to be a Tendency in all the Members of Communities, whether Natural or Civil, towards promoting the Good of their reſpective Bodies; ſo the Communities themſelves ought to tend to the Welfare of another Body, ſuch as is ſtill more general and comprehenſive.

* WHOSOEVER does not deteſt in his own Heart, this Self-Love, and this Inſtinct which prompts him to affect a Prehemipence above all Perſons and Things, is moſt wretchedly Blind; becauſe nothing has a greater Repugnancy to Juſtice and Truth. For, as it is falſe that we deſerve ſuch a Preference, ſo is it unjuſt (and indeed im-

poſſible) to arrive at it, becauſe all are ready to put in their Claim to the like Supremacy. This, then, is a manifeſt Piece of Injuſtice; ſuch as attends our Birth; ſuch as we are obliged to correct; and yet ſuch as, humanly ſpeaking, is above our Correction.

NEVERTHELESS, of all Religions except the Chriſtian, none has inform'd us, either that this is a Sin, or that we are born under its Power, or that we are bound to ſtrive againſt it, none has once thought of preſcribing a Method for its Cure.

* THERE is an inteſtine War in Man, between the Reaſon and the Paſſions. He might enjoy ſome ſort of Repoſe, were he only ſway'd by Reaſon without Paſſion; or only by Paſſion without Reaſon. But, ſince he is acted by both, he muſt live in continual Diſquiet, not being able to maintain the Peace with one, without entering into Hoſtility with the other. And hence he is always divided, and always at Variance with himſelf.

* IT is to be look'd upon as monſtrous and unnatural to live careleſly, while we are under an utter Ignorance of ourſelves: It is, however, far more terrible to live wickedly, while we are under a religious Perſuaſion and Belief. The greateſt Part of Mankind ſeem'd to be poſſeſs'd with one or the other of theſe Infatuations. X.

X.

The Jews.

ALMIGHTY God intending to ſhew the World, that he was able to form a People, ſpiritually Good and Righteous, and to fill them with Eternal Glory, was pleas'd to repreſent by the Goods of Nature what he propoſed to accompliſh in thoſe of Grace; that Men might learn to acknowledge the inviſible Effects of his Power, by their Experience of the Viſible.

Thus he ſaved his People from the Deluge, in the Perſon of *Noah*: He cauſed them to ſpring from *Abraham*: He redeemed them out of the Hands of their Enemies; and eſtabliſhed them in Reſt and Peace.

The Deſign of Providence in reſcuing them from the common Ruin, and in deducing their Nation from one Stock, was not barely to conduct them to a Land of Plenty. But as Nature is the Image and Reſemblance of Grace, ſo theſe viſible Miracles were Symbols and Pledges of the

Inviſible, to be performed in their Seaſon.

* ANOTHER Cauſe, why it pleaſed GOD in ſo wonderful a Manner to inſtitute and train up the *Jewiſh* People, ſeems to have been, that, having reſolved to abridge his faithful Servants of carnal and periſhable Enjoyments, he might evince, by ſuch a Series of Miracles, that he did not deny for want of Power to beſtow.

* THIS People have been always immerſed in groſs and earthly Conceits: As that their Father *Abraham*, even in reſpect of his Fleſh, was dear to GOD, and conſequently all who deſcended from him: That, for this Reaſon, GOD had multiplied them on the Earth; and by giving them ſpecial Marks of Diſtinction, had prevented their mixing with other Nations; had recover'd them out of *Egypt*, by many great and wonderful Signs, perform'd in their Favour; had fed them with Manna in the Wilderneſs; had brought them into a fruitful and happy Seat; had appointed over them Kings of their own Race; had rais'd them a magnificent Temple, for the offering up of Beaſts, and the purifying themſelves by the Blood of their Sacrifices; and would, in Concluſion, ſend them a Victorious *Meſſias*, who ſhould make them Maſters of the World.

THE

* THE *Jews* were accuſtomed to great and ſplendid Miracles; and, hence, looking on the Wonders of the Red-Sea, and of the promiſed Land only as an Abridgment of the mighty Things of their *Meſſias*, they expected from him ſtill more illuſtrious and ſurprizing Performances, of which all the Acts of *Moſes* ſhould ſeem but an imperfect Specimen.

WHEN they were now grown old in carnal Errors, *Jeſus Chriſt* actually came at the Time foretold, but not with that outward Splendor which had poſſeſs'd their Thought: And hence they apprehended him not to be the *Meſſias*. After his Death St. *Paul* was ſent to inſtruct Men, that all theſe Things happened in Figure, that the Kingdom of GOD was in the Spirit, not in the Fleſh; that their Enemies were not *Babylonians*, but their own Luſts and Paſſions; that GOD delighted not in Temples made with Hands, but in a pure and humble Mind; that Bodily Circumciſion was unprofitable, but the Circumciſion of the Heart greatly neceſſary and important, *&c.*

* GOD having not thought fit wholly to diſcloſe theſe Truths to ſo unworthy a People, and yet deſigning to foretel them, that they might hereafter gain the more eaſy Acceptation and Belief, ſignified the Time

of

of their Accompliſhment in expreſs Terms, and ſometimes clearly imparted the Things themſelves, but generally repreſented them under Shades and Figures; to the Intent, that thoſe who loved the Repreſentation, might fix on it without looking farther; and that thoſe who loved the Reality, might be able to diſcern it thro' the Repreſentation. Agreeably to this Deſign, we ſee the Nation dividing itſelf at the *Meſſia*'s Appearance: The ſpiritual Part received and embraced him; and the carnal Part, who rejected him, remain his Witneſſes to this Day.

*THE carnal *Jews* underſtood neither the Greatneſs nor the Humiliation of the *Meſſias*, foretold by their Prophets. They did not know him in his Greatneſs and Exaltation: As when they were aſſured that he ſhould be *David*'s *Lord*, tho' his *Son*; that he preceeded *Abraham*, and had ſeen him. They conceived him not ſo Great, as to have been from all Eternity. Nor did they leſs miſtake him in his Humiliation and Death. "*Chriſt* (ſay they) *abideth* "*for ever*, and this Man profeſſeth of him-"ſelf that he ſhall die." They neither believ'd him therefore to be Mortal, nor yet to be Eternal: They conſidered him with no other Regard, but to worldly Pomp and State.

THEY

* THEY ſo much doated on the *Shadows* of good Things, and ſo entirely fixed them as the Objects of their Hope, that they, at laſt, miſtook the Subſtance, when appearing at the Time and in the Manner deſcribed by the Prophets.

* MEN indiſpoſed to believing, are wont to have recourſe, for Shelter, to the Unbelief of the *Jews*. If Matters (ſay they) were indeed ſo clear and notorious, what ſhould hinder thoſe who were the Eye-Witneſſes of them, from being perfectly convinced? Whereas their Infidelity is really one of the Foundations of our Faith. Had they been indifferent Perſons, their Obſtinacy might have increaſed our Averſion, and have given us a better Colour for Jealouſy and Diſtruſt. But here's the Miracle, that the ſame People who were ſo violent Lovers of the Predictions, ſhould be no leſs violent Haters and Oppoſers of the Accompliſhments; and that this very Hatred and Oppoſition ſhould itſelf be one of the chief Predictions.

* To procure Authority and Reputation to the *Meſſias*, it was neceſſary that certain Prophecies ſhould precede his Appearance, and ſhould remain in the Cuſtody of unſuſpected Perſons, ſuch as were eminent for Diligence and Fidelity, and, above all, for

Zeal

Zeal, and ſuch as were remarkably known to the reſt of Mankind.

THAT Things might ſucceed accordingly, GOD was pleas'd to make Choice of this carnal People, and to give them in Charge the Predictions concerning the *Meſſias*, which deſcribed him after the Manner of a Temporal Deliverer, and a Diſpenſer of ſenſible Goods, ſuch as their Hearts were particularly affected with. Hence, as they receiv'd the Prophets with the greateſt Demonſtrations of Affection and Reverence, ſo they communicated to all Nations thoſe Books of the Prophets which foretold the coming of the Mighty One; aſſuring them that he would moſt certainly come, and in the very Manner expreſſed by their Records, which they kept open to the View of the whole World. But being finally deceiv'd by the Meanneſs and Ignominy of his Condition here on Earth, they became his greateſt Oppoſers. So that we have now a People, who of all Mankind can be leaſt ſuſpected of partial Favour towards us, thus lending their Aſſiſtance to ſupport our Cauſe, and, by the Zeal which they ſhew for their Law and their Prophets, preſerving, with the moſt exact Fidelity, our Evidences and their own Condemnation.

* THOSE who rejected and crucified our LORD, being offended at him, are the ſame

ſame People with whom thoſe Writings ſtill remain which teſtify concerning him; and which affirm that he ſhall be rejected by them; and ſhall be a Rock of Offence. Thus has their Refuſal added an eminent Mark to the Truth of his Credentials; and he has been equally demonſtrated for the *Meſſias* by the righteous Part of the *Jewiſh* Nation who embraced him, and by the wicked Part who deſpiſed him; the one Event no leſs than the other, having been long before prophetically declared.

* THE Reaſon why the Propheſies were conceiv'd with a double Senſe, a remote and ſpiritual, to which this People were ſtrongly averſe, under an obvious and carnal, to which they were eagerly inclined, ſeems to have been this: Had the ſpiritual Senſe been entirely diſcloſed to them, it being ſuch as they were unable to love, to embrace, or even to bear, they would have had very little Zeal to preſerve their Writings and Inſtitutions: Or, if they could have reliſhed theſe ſpiritual Promiſes, and had therefore kept their Books uncorrupted till the Time of the *Meſſias*, then their Evidence muſt have ſuffer'd in its Force, as being the Teſtimony of Friends. We ſee, therefore, on the one Hand, the Neceſſity of concealing the ſpiritnal Senſe: Yet, on the other Hand, ſhould this Concealment

have been too deep for all Light and Diſcovery, the great Evidences of the *Meſſias* had been ſuppreſs'd. What Expedient therefore was applied? The ſpiritual Senſe was, as to the main, diſguis'd under the Carnal, yet in ſome Places was expreſly delivered without the leaſt Covert or Shade. Again, the Time and State of the World were ſo exactly, and with ſo many Circumſtances, deſcribed and determined, that the Sun is not clearer at Noon Day. And there are ſome Paſſages in which the ſpiritual Import is ſo apparently taught, that no leſs Degree of Blindneſs than that which the Mind ſuffers when entirely oppreſs'd and enſlav'd by the Body, can withhold us from diſcerning it.

SEE then the admirable Diſpoſal of Providence! In an infinite Number of Places the ſpiritual Senſe is cover'd over with another; yet in ſome (tho' rarely occurring) it is openly reveal'd; and this in ſuch a Manner, as that the Paſſages in which it is ſuppreſs'd are capable of both Senſes; but thoſe in which it is declared can agree only to the ſpiritual.

So that this Proceeding can by no Means be accuſed, as tending to lead Men into Error; nor could by any, but by a People whoſe Heart was ſo entirely carnal, have been perverted or miſunderſtood.

THUS when good Things were promis'd them in great Abundance, what could hinder them from interpreting this Promiſe of true and real Goods, but their Covetouſneſs? which determin'd their Apprehenſion to earthly Riches: Whereas, thoſe who placed their only Treaſure in Heaven, would have referr'd the Promiſe to GOD alone. For there are two Principles which divide the Wills of Men, Covetouſneſs and Charity. It is not indeed impoſſible that Covetouſneſs ſhould ſubſiſt with Faith, or Charity with temporal Poſſeſſions: But here's the Difference; the former imploys it ſelf in uſing GOD, and enjoying the World; the latter in uſing the World, and enjoying GOD.

AGAIN, the End which we purſue is that which gives Names to Things; and whatever hinders us in the Proſecution of this, is ſaid to be at *Enmity* with us. Thus the Creatures, which are good in themſelves, do yet become the Enemies of good Men, when they divert them from GOD; and GOD himſelf is ſtil'd an Enemy by thoſe whom he oppoſes in their Luſts.

HENCE, the Appellation of Enemy, changing its Conſtruction according to the different End which Men propoſe, good Men by it underſtood their Paſſions, and carnal Men the *Babylonians*; ſo that this Term

was

was obſcure only with Reſpect to the Wicked. And 'tis on this Account that *Iſaiah* ſays, *ſigna Legem in Diſcipulis meis, ſeal the Law among my Diſciples;* and that he tells us, *Chriſt* ſhall be *a Stone of Stumbling, and a Rock of Offence;* tho' as our Lord himſelf declares, *Bleſſed are thoſe who ſhall not be offended in* him.

THE Prophet *Hoſea* evidently declares the ſame Difference: *Who is wiſe, and he ſhall underſtand theſe Things; prudent, and he ſhall know them? For the Ways of the Lord are right, and the Juſt ſhall walk in them; but Tranſgreſſors ſhall fall therein.*

YET this Book of the Old Teſtament, which was in ſuch a Manner framed and compiled, as that while it enlightened ſome, it no leſs blinded others, did nevertheleſs demonſtrate in the latter the Truth which it diſcover'd to the former. For the viſible and temporal Goods which they receiv'd from GOD were ſo great and divine, as to teſtify his Power of conferring all inviſible and ſpiritual Bleſſings, together with the End of all, the *Meſſias.*

* THE Time of our Lord's firſt coming was expreſly foretold; but that of his ſecond is not. Becauſe at his firſt Coming he was to appear in a private Manner, and without any ſplendid Marks of Diſtinction; whereas

whereas his ſecond Event ſhall be ſurpriſing, publick, illuſtrious, and viſible to his greateſt Enemies. But' tho his firſt Appearance was to be thus obſcure, diſcernable only by thoſe who ſearched the Scriptures, yet were Things ſo providentially diſpoſed that all this contributed to the making him known. The *Jews* were his Witneſſes by receiving him; becauſe they were the Guardians of the Prophecies, and they were no leſs his Witneſſes by rejecting him, becauſe in this they very ſignally accompliſhed the ſame Prophecies.

* THE *Jews* were in Poſſeſſion of Miracles which they had ſeen performed, and of Prophecies which they had ſeen fulfilled. Again, the Doctrine of their Law was comprized in the Love and Adoration of one GOD; and this Doctrine was perpetual: It had, therefore, all the Marks of the true Religion. And ſo it really was; for we ought to diſtinguiſh between the Doctrine of the *Jews*, and the Doctrine of the Law of the *Jews*. The Doctrine of the *Jews* could not have been true, tho' we ſhould ſuppoſe it to have had Miracles and Prophecies, and Perpetuity on its Side; becauſe it was deficient in the main Principle, the loving and adoring of GOD alone.

THE *Jewiſh* Religion ought to be conſidered very differently in the Tradition of of Holy Men, and in the Tradition of the Vulgar. The Moral it teaches, and the Bleſſedneſs it propoſes, are both ridiculous, according to the Tradition of the Vulgar; but they are incomparably great and excellent in the Tradition of Holy Men. Its Foundation is wonderful; 'tis the moſt ancient and moſt authentick Book in the World: And whereas *Mahomet*, to procure the Eſtabliſhment of his Writings, has forbidden them to be read *Moſes*, to confirm the Authority of *his*, has commanded all the World to read them.

* THE *Jewiſh* Religion is altogether Divine in its Authority, in its Duration, in its perpetual Obligation, in its Morality, in its Conduct, in its Doctrine, in its Effects.

THIS whole Model and Pattern was formed with Reſemblance to the Truth of the *Meſſias*; and the Truth of the *Meſſias* was diſcovered and teſtify'd by this its Model and Pattern.

UNDER the *Jewiſh* OEconomy Truth appear'd but in Figure: In Heaven it is open and without Veil: In the Church Militant it is ſo veil'd as to be yet diſcerned by its Correſpondence to the Figure. As the Figure was firſt built upon the Truth,

ſo

ſo the Truth is now diſtinguiſhable by the Figure.

* HE that takes his Eſtimate of the *Jewiſh* Religion from the Groſſneſs of the *Jewiſh* Multitude, cannot fail of making a very wrong Judgment. It is to be ſought for in the ſacred Writings, and in the Traditions of the Prophets, who have given us ſufficient Aſſurance that they underſtood the Law not according to the Letter. Our Religion, in like Manner, is true and divine in the Goſpels, in the Preaching of the Apoſtles, and in the Traditions of the Church; but it appears utterly disfigured in thoſe who maim or corrupt it.

* THE *Jews* ſeem to have been of two Sorts, according to their different Paſſions and Deſires; which in ſome were merely *Pagan*, in others altogether *Chriſtian.*

* THE *Meſſias*, according to the Carnal *Jews, was to come* like a mighty temporal Prince. According to Carnal *Chriſtians*, his *is come* to diſpenſe with our loving GOD, and to give us Sacraments which ſhall operate without our Concurrence. This is no more the Religion of *Chriſtians*, than that was properly the Religion of *Jews.*

* THE true Votaries of both Religions agree in acknowledging a *Meſſias*, who ſhall inſpire them with the Love of GOD,

and by that Love ſhall make them triumph over their Enemies.

* THE Veil which is upon the Scriptures, in reſpect of the Carnal *Jews*, holds likewiſe in reſpect of wicked *Chriſtians*, and of all thoſe who will not ſubmit to hate and deteſt themſelves. But how well are we diſpoſed for the underſtanding of the Scriptures, and for the Knowledge of *Jeſus Chriſt*, when we have once made ourſelves the Objects of our real Averſion and Abhorrence.

* THE Carnal *Jews* fill the middle Place between *Chriſtians* and *Pagans*. The *Pagans* knew not GOD, and, therefore, loved nothing but the World: The *Jews* knew the true GOD, and ſtill loved nothing but the World: While we *Chriſtians*, as we have received the Knowledge of the true GOD, ſo we have renounced the Love of the World. *Jews* and *Pagans* love the ſame World: *Chriſtians* and *Jews* know the ſame GOD.

* THE *Jews* are a People viſibly framed to be the ſtanding Witneſſes of the *Meſſias*. They preſerve the Scripture with the greateſt Diligence; they love it with the greateſt Ardour; but they are wholly at a Loſs in apprehending it. And all this has been expreſly foretold; for 'tis ſaid, that the Statutes

Statutes of GOD ſhould be delivered to them but *as a Book that is ſeal'd.*

* So long as there was a Succeſſion of Prophets to guard the Law, the People were entirely negligent as to its Cuſtody. But upon the ceaſing of the Prophets, the Zeal of the People ſupplied their Room. And this, amongſt others, is a Providence too remarkable to be overlooked.

XI.

MOSES.

WHEN the Creation of the World began now to ſtand at a remoter Diſtance, GOD was pleas'd to provide a Contemporary Hiſtorian, and to appoint a whole Nation for the Keepers of his Hiſtory; as well as that this Regiſter might be the moſt authentick in the World, as that all Mankind might hence be inſtructed in a Fact, which was ſo neceſſary for them to know, and yet ſo impoſſible otherwiſe to be known.

* *MOSES* was a Perſon of very great Genius and Capacity. This is on all hands

confeſſed. Had he, therefore, written with an Intention of deceiving, he would have executed it in ſuch a Manner as not to be convicted of the Deceit. His Conduct we find to be quite different: Inſomuch that had he delivered what was fabulous, there was not one *Jew* but could have detected the Impoſture.

WHY, for Inſtance, does he make the Lives of the firſt Men ſo vaſtly long, and ſo very few Generations of them? In a Multitude of Generations he might have ſhelter'd himſelf from Diſcovery; but in a few this Artifice was impracticable. For 'tis not the Number of Years, but of Generations, which renders Things obſcure.

TRUTH never decays, or is impaired but by the Succeſſion and Change of Men. And yet we find this Hiſtorian placing the two greateſt Events that can enter into human Thought, the Creation and the Deluge ſo cloſe together, as even to make them touch, by Means of the few Generations which he counts between. Inſomuch, that at the Time of his regiſtring theſe Things, the Memory of them could not but be ſtill freſh and lively in the Minds of all the *Jewiſh* Nation.

* *LAMEC* had a Sight of *Adam*, *Sem* of *Lamec*, *Abraham* of *Sem*, *Jacob* of *Abraham*, and *Moſes* of thoſe who had ſeen *Jacob.*

Jacob. Therefore the Creation and the Deluge are indubitably true. This Argument muſt be acknowledg'd for concluſive, by thoſe who apprehend its Proceſs.

* THE Longævity of the Patriarchs, inſtead of contributing to the Decay of paſt Memory, was in the higheſt Degree ſerviceable to its Preſervation. For if we are ſometimes hinder'd from being ſufficiently expert in the Story of our Anceſtors, it is becauſe we have ſeldom lived in their Company, or becauſe they left the World before we arrived at the Age of Reaſon. But when human Life ran out to ſuch an Extent, Children enjoyed the Means of converſing long with their Parents. And what could be the Subject of this Converſation, but the Lives and Actions of their Progenitors: Since theſe, compriz'd the Body of Univerſal Hiſtory, and ſince Men were as yet unacquainted with Arts and Sciences, which now take up ſo large a Share in our Diſcourſe? It ſeems evident, therefore, that the keeping exact Genealogies was the peculiar Care, and almoſt the whole Employment of thoſe earlier Times.

XII.

FIGURES.

AS there are ſome Figures clear and demonſtrative, ſo there are others which ſeem leſs natural, and which prove nothing but to thoſe who have diſcovered the ſame Truths by other Lights. The latter Figures may ſeem to reſemble thoſe invented by ſome Men who build Prophecies on the *Revelations* expounded according to their own Fancy. But here's the Difference: Such Perſons have no infallible Predictions to ſupport the doubtful ones which they would introduce. So that they are guilty of the higheſt Injuſtice while they pretend theirs to be alike well grounded with ſome of ours; becauſe they have not others, which are inconteſtable, to prove them by, as we have. This is by no Means, therefore, a parallel Caſe; nor ought we to compare and confound Things which agree in one Reſpect, when they are ſo vaſtly diſtant in all others.

**JESUS CHRIST*, prefigured by *Joſeph*, the Beloved of his Father, and by

by him ſent to viſit his Brethren, is the innocent Perſon whom his Brethren ſold for a few Pieces of Silver, and who, by this Means, became their Lord and Saviour, nay, the Saviour of Strangers, and of the whole World; which had not happen'd but for this Plot of deſtroying him, this Act of rejecting him, and of expoſing him to ſale.

CONSIDER in both Examples the ſame Fortune, and the ſame Innocence; *Joſeph* in the Priſon between two Criminals, *Jeſus* on the Croſs between two Thieves: *Joſeph* foretels Deliverance to one of his Companions, and Death to the other, from the ſame Omens; *Jeſus Chriſt* ſaves one Companion, and deſerts the other, after the ſame Crimes: *Joſeph* could barely foretel; *Jeſus Chriſt*, by his own Action, performs what he had foretold: *Joſeph* requeſts the Perſon who ſhould be delivered to be mindful of him in his Glory; the Perſon, ſaved by *Jeſus Chriſt*, entreats his Deliverer to remember him when he came into his Kingdom.

* THE *Jewiſh* Synagogue never totally ceaſed, and became extinct, becauſe it was the Figure of the *Chriſtian* Church: And yet becauſe it was only the Figure, it was ſuffer'd to fall into Servitude. The Figure ſubſiſted 'till the Arrival of the Truth; To the Intent that the Church might be al-

always viſible, either in the Shadow and Repreſentation, or in the Subſtance and Reality.

XIII.

That the Law was Figurative.

TO evince the Authority of both Teſtaments at once, we are only to obſerve whether that which is propheſied in the one, be performed and accompliſhed in the other.

* IF we would effectually try and examine the Prophecies, we ought firſt of all to be ſure that we rightly underſtand them. For, ſuppoſing them to have but one Senſe, it is certain the *Meſſias* cannot yet be come; but, ſuppoſing them to have two Senſes, the *Meſſias* is certainly come, in the Perſon of *Jeſus Chriſt.*

ALL the Queſtion therefore, is, whether they are indeed capable of a double Meaning? whether they are Figures or Realities, that is, whether we ought not to ſeek ſomething farther in them than what they immediately preſent? or whether we ought to acquieſce in that Conſtruction which offers itſelf to us at the firſt View.

IF

IF the Law and the Sacrifices are real, 'tis neceſſary that they ſhould pleaſe GOD, and, on no Account be diſpleaſing to him. If they are figurative, 'tis neceſſary they ſhould be pleaſing and diſpleaſing to GOD, in different Regards. But now, thro' the whole Series of Scripture, they are ſometimes affirmed to pleaſe GOD, ſometimes to diſpleaſe him, and, by conſequence, they are only figurative.

"IT is ſaid, that the Law ſhall be changed; that the Sacrifices ſhall ceaſe; that the People ſhall continue without a King, without a Prince, and without a Sacrifice; that a new Covenant ſhall be eſtabliſhed; that a Reform ſhall be made in the Law; that the *Jews* received Commandments which were not good; that their Sacrifices were Abominations, and Things which GOD required not at their Hands.

IT is ſaid, again, that the Law ſhall abide for ever; that the Covenant ſhall be eternal, the Sacrifices perpetual; and that the Scepter ſhall never depart from *Judah*, becauſe 'tis to continue till the Everlaſting King ſhall commence his Reign. Do ſuch Expreſſions evince all this to be real? No. Do they demonſtrate it to be figurative? No. They only ſhew that it muſt be either Reality or Figure. But the former compared with

with theſe latter, exclude the Reality, and eſtabliſh the Figure.

ALL theſe Paſſages taken together cannot be applied to the Reality; but they may be all applied to the Figure: Therefore, they were ſpoken in Figure, not in Reality.

* WOULD we know whether the Law and the Sacrifices are real or figurative, we ought to diſcover whether the Prophets in ſpeaking of theſe Things had their Eyes and Thoughts entirely fix'd on them, ſo as to look no farther than the old Covenant; or whether they did not carry their Intention to ſomewhat elſe, of which all this was but the Shadow and Semblance; as in a Picture we contemplate the Thing repreſented. And in Order to this Diſcovery, we need only hear what they ſay.

Now when they ſpeak of the Covenant as being everlaſting, is it poſſible they ſhould mean the ſame Covenant, which they elſewhere teſtify ſhall be changed? The like may be obſerv'd of the Sacrifices, *&c.*

* THE Prophets have expreſly ſaid, that *Iſrael* ſhall be always belov'd of GOD, and that the Law ſhall be an Ordinance for ever. But they have likewiſe ſaid, that their Words were veil'd, and their Meaning not to be fathom'd by their Hearers.

WE

* WE may illuſtrate this whole Caſe by the familiar Inſtance of writing in *Cyphers.* Suppoſe we intercept a Letter of Importance, in which we diſcern one plain and obvious Meaning, and are told, at the ſame Time, that the Senſe is yet ſo obſcured, as that we ſhall even ſee the Words without ſeeing it, and underſtand them without underſtanding it; what are we to judge but that the Piece has been penn'd in Cyphers? and ſo much the rather, the more apparent Contrarieties we meet with in the literal Conſtruction? How great Eſteem and Veneration ought we, therefore, to expreſs for thoſe who decipher this Writing to us, and bring us acquainted with its Secrets, eſpecially if the Key which they make uſe of be eaſy, agreeable, and natural? This is what was perform'd by our Lord and his Apoſtles: They have open'd the Seal, and rent the Veil, and reſcued the ſpiritual Senſe from the literal Diſguiſe. They have taught us that our Enemies are our own carnal Affections, and that our Redeemer is to be a ſpiritual Conqueror; that he is to have a firſt and a ſecond Coming, the one in Humility to abaſe the Proud, the other in Glory to exalt the Humble: In a Word, that *JESUS Chriſt* is to be GOD, as well as Man.

* IT was our Lord's chief Employment to inform Men, that they were Lovers of themſelves; that they were Sinners and Slaves, blind, diſtemper'd, and miſerable; that hereupon, it was needful he ſhould deliver and heal them, ſhould enlighten, reſtore, and bleſs them: That all this was to be perform'd by their hating themſelves, and by their taking up each his Croſs, and following him, their Maſter, to Affliction and Death.

* *THE Letter killeth.* It was neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, that GOD ſhould humble himſelf; that there ſhould be a Circumciſion of the Heart; a true Faſt, a true Sacrifice, a true Temple; a two-fold Law, (as well as a two-fold Table of the Law,) a two-fold Temple, a two-fold Captivity. This was the difficult Cypher preſented to us.

WE have, at length, been taught by our *Lord* to unfold the Intricacy of theſe Figures: We have been inform'd what it is to be truly free, to be a true *Iſraelite*; we have been ſhewn the true Circumciſion, the true Bread of Heaven, *&c.*

* IN the Promiſes of the Old Teſtament every one finds what he chiefly delights to ſeek, what is moſt agreeable to his own Heart and Affections; Spiritual Goods or Temporal, GOD or the Creatures. But with

this Difference, that they who ſeek the Creatures find them attended with numerous Contradictions, with a Prohibition to love them, and with a difficult Injunction to love and worſhip GOD alone: Whereas they who ſeek GOD, find him without the leaſt Repugnancy, and with a pleaſing Command to admit no other Object of Worſhip or of Love.

* THE main Sources of verbal Contrarieties in Scriptures, are the Myſteries of a GOD humbled to the Death of the Croſs; of a *Meſſias* triumphing over Death by dying himſelf; of the two Natures in *JESUS CHRIST*; of his twofold Coming; of the two Eſtates and Conditions of human Nature.

* As we cannot juſtly compoſe a Man's Character, but by accounting for all the Contrarieties in his Humour or Conduct; and as it is not enough to purſue a Train of agreeable Qualities, without giving the Reſolution of thoſe which appear to be oppoſite; ſo e'er we can perfectly underſtand the Senſe of an Author, it's neceſſary that all the contrary Paſſages ſhould be reconcil'd.

WHEREFORE in order to a right Apprehenſion of the Scripture, we ought to find out a Senſe in which all the ſeemingly oppoſite Places ſhall agree. Nor is it ſufficient to have an Interpretation in which many conſonant Paſſages ſhall be united, but

we

we muſt have one in which the moſt diſſonant ſhall meet and conſpire.

EVERY Author either has one principal Aim and Purport, in which all the ſuppoſed Differences will be found conſiſtent, or he has no Meaning at all. The latter cannot be ſaid of the Scriptures and Prophecies. They unqueſtionably abound in Good Senſe. Some one Meaning, then, they will afford us, by which the ſeveral Repugnancies in Style may be adjuſted and compoſed.

THEIR true Senſe, therefore, cannot be that which is given them by the *Jews*. But in *JESUS CHRIST* all the various Diſſonancies are reduced to perfect Harmony.

THE *Jews* had not Skill enough to make the Abrogation of the Royalty and Principality, foretold by *Hoſea*, accord with with the Prophecy of *Jacob*.

IF we take the Law, the Sacrifices, and the Kingdom, for Things really and ultimately deſigned, we ſhall not be able to reconcile all the Paſſages of the ſame Author, nor of the ſame Book, nor, many Times, of the ſame Chapter. Which ſufficiently diſcovers the Intention of the Writers.

* THE *Jews* were not permitted to offer Sacrifice, or ſo much as to eat the Tenths, elſe-

elſewhere than at *Jeruſalem* only, the Place which the Lord had choſen.

* *HOSEA* foretold, that the *Jews* ſhould be *without a King, without a Prince, without Sacrifices, and without Images.* Which Prediction we now ſee fully accompliſhed; no Sacrifice being legally to be offered but at *Jeruſalem.*

* WHENEVER the Word of GOD, which is eternally true, ſeems to be falſe in the literal Conſtruction, its Truth is preſerved in the Spiritual. *Sit thou on my Right Hand:* This is falſe if ſpoken literally, yet 'tis ſpiritually true. Such Expreſſions as theſe deſcribe GOD after the Manner of Men: And this in particular only implies, that the ſame Honour which Men intend in ſetting others at their Right Hand, GOD will alſo confer, in the Exaltation of the *Meſſias.* It is, therefore, a Note of the Divine Intention, but affects not the preciſe Manner of the Execution.

THUS again, when 'tis ſaid to the *Iſraelites*, GOD has received the Odour of your Incenſe, and will give you in Recompence a fertile and plentiful Land, the Meaning is no more than this, That the ſame Affection which Men, delighted with your Perfumes, would expreſs by rewarding you with a fruitful Land, the ſame will GOD expreſs towards you in his Bleſſings; becauſe you

alſo entertain the like grateful Diſpoſition towards GOD, as a Man does towards his Superiors, when he thus preſents them with ſweet Odours.

THE ſole Aim and Intention of the whole Scripture is *Charity*. All that tends not to this End, is merely Figure. For ſince there can be but one Point and ultimate Scope, whatever is not directed thither in expreſs Terms, muſt, at leaſt, be couch'd under ſuch as are ambiguous.

GOD, in Compaſſion to our Weakneſs, which Variety alone can pleaſe, has ſo varied this one Precept of Charity, as to conduct us every Way to our real Intereſt and Welfare. For one Thing alone being ſtrictly neceſſary, and yet our Hearts being ſet on divers Things, GOD has provided for the Satisfaction of both theſe Inclinations together, by giving us ſuch a Diverſity as ſtill leads us forward to the one Thing neceſſary.

* THE *Rabbins* take the *Breaſts of his Spouſe* for Figure; as they do every Thing which has not a Tendency to the ſole Mark of their Expectation, worldly and carnal Goods.

* THERE are, and always have been, Men who rightly apprehend, that the only Enemy of human Nature is Concupiſcence, which turns us away from GOD; and that GOD himſelf, not a fruitful Land, is our only Good and Happineſs. Thoſe who

fancy the Good of Man to conſiſt in gratifying the Fleſh, and his Evil in the Diſappointment of ſenſual Deſire, let them wallow in their Pleaſures, let them die in their Enjoyments: But as for thoſe who ſeek God with their whole Heart, whom nothing can grieve but the being deprived of the Light of his Countenance, who have no Deſire but to enjoy his Favour, no Enemies but ſuch as divert or withhold them from him, and whoſe greateſt Affliction is to ſee themſelves encompaſſed and even ſubdued by ſuch Enemies, let them be comforted: For them there is a Deliverer, for them there is a God!

A *Meſſias* was promiſed, who ſhould reſcue Men from their Enemies. A *Meſſias* is come; but to reſcue Men from no other Enemies than their Sins.

* WHEN *David* ſays that the *Meſſias* ſhall deliver the People from their Enemies, this, by a carnal Expoſitor, may be applied to the *Egyptians:* And then, I confeſs, I am at a Loſs to ſhew him how the Prophecy has been fulfill'd. Yet it may be likewiſe applied to Mens Iniquities; ſince theſe, and not the *Egyptians*, are to be look'd on as real Enemies.

BUT if in other Places he declares, as he does, (together with *Iſaiah*, and others,) that the *Meſſias* ſhall deliver

his People from their Sins; the Ambiguity is taken off, and the double Senſe of *Enemies* reduced to the ſingle Meaning of *Iniquities*. For if theſe latter were chiefly in his Thought, he might well expreſs them by borrowing the Name of the former: But if his Mind was wholly bent on the former, 'twas impoſſible he ſhould ſignify them under the Appellation of the latter.

MOSES, *David*, and *Iſaiah*, all ſpeak of this Victory in the ſame Terms. Muſt we not, therefore, acknowledge, that theſe Terms have the ſame Senſe; and that *Moſes* and *David* had but one Intention, while both ſpeak of Mens Enemies, and the latter viſibly alludes to Mens Sins.

DANIEL, in his ninth Chapter, prays that the People may be delivered from the Captivity of their Enemies; but his Eye was plainly fixed on their Tranſgreſſions. And to ſhew that it was ſo, he proceeds to relate the ſending of *Gabriel* to him, with an Aſſurance that his Prayer was heard; and that after the ſeventy Weeks the People ſhould obtain Deliverance from their Iniquity, that Tranſgreſſions ſhould then have an End, and the Redeemer, *the moſt Holy*, ſhould *bring in* (not legal, but) *everlaſting Righteouſneſs*.

WHEN

WHEN we are once let into theſe Secrets 'tis impoſſible for us not to diſcern and apprehend them. Let us read the Books of the Old Teſtaments by this Light: Let us ſee whether *Abraham*'s Lineage and Deſcent were the real Cauſes of his being ſtyled the Friend of GOD? Whether the promis'd Land was the true Seat of Reſt? Neither of theſe can be affirm'd; therefore both were Symbolical. In a word, let us examine all the legal Ceremonies, and all the Precepts which are not of *Charity*, and we ſhall find them compoſing one general Image, one uninterrupted Allegory and Prefiguration.

XIV.

JESUS CHRIST

THE infinite Diſtance that there is between *Body* and *Spirit*, does but imperfectly repreſent to us the the Diſtance between *Spirit* and *Charity*, which being altogether ſupernatural may be ſaid to be infinitely more infinite.

ALL the Splendor of outward Greatneſs caſts no Luſtre towards the Eyes of

thoſe who are engaged in the Purſuits of Wit.

THE Greatneſs of Wit and Parts is wholly indiſcernable to the Rich, to Kings, and Conquerors, and to all the Great Ones of the World.

THE Greatneſs of that Wiſdom which cometh from above, is alike imperceptible to the Worldly, and to the Witty. Theſe are three Orders of quite different Kinds.

GREAT Genius's have their Kingdom and Splendor, their Victory and Glory; and want not carnal Greatneſs, becauſe it has no relation to the Grandeur which they purſue. This Grandeur does not indeed ſtrike the Eyes, but 'tis enough that it caſts a diſtinguiſhable Radiancy on the Soul.

THE Saints likewiſe have their Empire, their Luſtre, their Greatneſs, and their Triumphs; and want not the Pomp of Honour, or the Pride of Genius; for theſe Things are quite out of their Sphere and Order, and ſuch as neither increaſe nor diminiſh the Grandeur to which they aſpire. Theſe truly Great Ones, are equally inviſible to bodily Eyes, and to curious and ſubtle Wits; but they are manifeſted to God and Angels, and are not ambitious of other Spectators.

ARCHIMEDES would have gained the ſame Eſteem, without his Relation to the

the Royal Blood of *Sicily*. It is true he won no Battels; but he has left to all the World the Benefit of his admirable Inventions. O! how great, how bright does he appear to the Eyes of the Mind?

JESUS CHRIST, without worldly Riches, without the exterior Productions of Science, was infinitely great in his ſublime Order of Holineſs. He neither publiſhed Inventions, nor poſſeſſed Kingdoms; but he was humble, patient, pure before GOD, terrible to evil Spirits, and without Spot of Sin. O! with what illuſtrious Pomp, with what tranſcendant Magnificence, did he come attended, to ſuch as beheld with the Eyes of the Heart, and with thoſe Faculties which are the Judges and Diſcerners of true Wiſdom.

IT had been needleſs for *Archimedes*, tho' of princely Deſcent, to have acted the Prince in his Books of Geometry.

IT had been needleſs for our Lord *JESUS CHRIST* to have aſſumed the State of an earthly King, for the Illuſtration of his Kingdom of Holineſs. But how great, how excellent, did he appear in the Brightneſs of his proper Order?

'Tis moſt unreaſonable to be ſcandaliz'd at the mean Condition of our Lord, as if it were oppoſed in the ſame Order and Kind, to the Greatneſs which he came to

diſplay. Let us conſider this Greatneſs in his Life, in his Sufferings, in his Solitude, in his Death, in the Choice of his Attendants, in their Act of forſaking him, in the Privacy of his Reſurrection, and in all the other Parts of his Hiſtory; we ſhall find it ſo truly rais'd and noble, as to leave no Ground for our being offended at a Meanneſs which was quite of another Order.

BUT there are ſome who can admire only the Greatneſs of this World; as if there were no proper Greatneſs in Wit: And others who are charm'd only with Greatneſs of Wit, as if there were not ſtill a more noble, a more ſublime Greatneſs in Wiſdom.

THE whole Syſtem of Bodies, the Firmament, the Stars, the Earth, and the Kingdoms of it, are not fit to be oppoſed in Value to the loweſt Mind or Spirit; becauſe *Spirit* is endued with the Knowledge and Apprehenſion of all this; whereas *Body* is utterly ſtupid and inſenſible. Again, the whole united Syſtems of Bodies and Spirits, are not comparable to the leaſt Motion of *Charity*; becauſe this is ſtill of an Order infinitely more exalted and divine.

FROM all *Body* together we are not able to extract one Thought. This is impoſſible, and quite of another Order. Again, all *Body* and *Spirit* together are unable

to

to produce one Spark of *Charity*. This is likewiſe impoſſible, and of an Order above Nature.

* *JESUS CHRIST* lived in ſo much Obſcurity, (as to what the World terms obſcure,) that the *Pagan* Hiſtorians, who were wont to record only Perſons of Eminence and Things of Importance, have ſcarce afforded him a ſlender Notice.

* WHO amongſt Men was ever array'd in ſo much Splendor as our *Lord?* The whole *Jewiſh* Nation propheſied of him before his Coming: The Gentile World adored him at his Coming: Both *Jews* and *Gentiles* regarded him as their Common Centre, their Expectation, and Deſire. And yet who had ever ſo little Enjoyment of ſo abundant Glory? Of thirty three Years, thirty he ſpent in Privacy, and at a Diſtance from the World. During the three which remained, he was cenſured for an Impoſtor, he was rejected by the Prieſts and Rulers of his Nation, deſpiſed by his Kinſman and Friends; and, in Concluſion, he ſuffered a ſhameful Death, betray'd by one of his Attendants, abjur'd by another, and deſerted by all.

WHAT Share then can he be ſuppoſed to have born in all this Splendor? Never Perſon was in greater Glory; never Perſon

was

was in deeper Diſgrace. His whole Splendor, therefore, was deſigned for our ſakes, and to render him diſcernable to us; but not the leaſt Ray was reflected back upon himſelf.

OUR *Lord* diſcourſeth of the ſublimeſt Subjects in a Phraſe ſo plain and natural, as if it had not been deeply conſidered, but withal ſo pure and exact, as to ſhew that it proceeded from the greateſt Depth of Thought. The joining of this Accuracy with this Simplicity is admirable.

* WHO made the *Evangeliſts* acquainted with the Perfections and Qualities of a Soul truly Heroic, that they ſhould be able to paint it after ſo inimitable a Manner in the Perſon of *JESUS CHRIST?* What is the Reaſon that they deſcribe him weak and deſponding in his Agony? Did they want Skill or Colours to repreſent a patient and conſtant Death? No certainly: For St. *Luke* has drawn that of St. *Stephen* with more Bravery than that of our *Lord.* It was therefore wiſe and juſt to make him capable of Fear, while the Neceſſity of Death remain'd at a Diſtance, but fearleſs when it arriv'd. And here, again, is the remarkable Difference; when he appears dejected, the Affliction is ſuch as proceeds from himſelf; but when afflicted by Men, he is all Courage and Reſolution.

BE-

* BEFORE the Birth of *JESUS CHRIST* the Goſpel ſpeaks little of the Virgin-ſtate of his holy Mother; that there might be no Part of ſacred Hiſtory but what ſhould directly bear a Reference to her Son.

* THE Old and New Teſtament equally regard *JESUS CHRIST;* the former as its Hope and Expectation; the latter as its Author and Example; both as their common Centre and Aim.

* THE Prophets had the Gift of foretelling; but never were foretold themſelves: The Saints, which follow'd, were foretold; but had not the Power of foretelling: Our *Lord*, as he was the great Subject of Prophecies, ſo he was himſelf the Chief of Prophets.

* *JESUS CHRIST* for all Mankind: *Moſes* for a ſingle Nation.

* THE *Jews* were bleſs'd in *Abraham:* (*I will bleſs them that bleſs thee:*) But all the Nations of the Earth are bleſs'd in *Abraham*'s *Seed:* (*A Light to lighten the Gentiles*, &c.) *He has not done ſo to any Nation*, ſays *David*, ſpeaking of the *Law: He has done ſo to all Nations*, may we ſay, ſpeaking of the *Goſpel.*

THUS is it the ſole Prerogative of *JESUS CHRIST* to be an univerſal Benefit and Bleſſing. The Sacraments and Service of the Church have an Effect only on actual Believers

lievers; the Sacrifice of our Lord on the Croſs extends its meritorious Influence to the whole World.

* LET us then ſtretch out our Arms to embrace our merciful Deliverer; who, having been promiſed four thouſand Years before, came at length to ſuffer and to die for us, at the Time and with the Circumſtances of the Promiſe: And, waiting by his gracious Aſſiſtance, till we ſhall die in Peace, thro' the Hope of being eternally united to him, let us in the mean while live with Comfort; whether amongſt the good Things which he ſo bountifully gives us to enjoy, or amongſt the evil Things which he ſhall pleaſe to bring on us, for our Soul's Health, and which, by his own Example, he has taught us to ſuſtain.

XV.

The Evidences of JESUS CHRIST *from the Prophecies.*

THE nobleſt Evidences of our Lord, are the Prophecies which preceded him. And accordingly it has pleas'd GOD to exerciſe a peculiar Care in this Behalf. For the full Accom-

Accompliſhment of them being a perpetual Miracle which reacheth from the Beginning to the End of the Church, ſixteen hundred Years together, GOD rais'd up a Succeſſion of Prophets; and during the Space of four hundred Years after, he diſpers'd theſe Prophecies, together with the *Jews* that kept them, thro' all Regions of the World. See the wonderful Preparation to our Lord's Appearance! As his Goſpel was to be embraced and believed by all Nations, there was a Neceſſity not only of Prophecies to gain it this Belief, but likewiſe of diffuſing theſe Prophecies to the ſame Extent with human Race.

* SUPPOSING one ſingle Man to have left a Book of Predictions concerning *JESUS CHRIST*, as to the Time and Manner of his Coming, and ſuppoſing him to have come agreeably to theſe Predictions, the Argument would be of almoſt infinite Force. Yet, here the Evidence is ſtronger, beyond all Compariſon: A Succeſſion of Men, for the Space of four thouſand Years, follow one another, without Interruption or Variation, in foretelling the ſame great Event. A whole People are the Harbingers of the *Meſſias*; and ſuch a People as ſubſiſted four thouſand Years to teſtify in a general Body, their aſſured Hope and Expectation,

tation, from which no Severity of Threats or Perſecutions could oblige them to depart. This is a Caſe which challengeth, in a far more tranſcendent Degree our Aſſent and Wonder.

* THE Time of our *Lord*'s Appearance was ſignified by the State of the *Jews*; by the Condition of the heathen World; by the Compariſon between the two Temples; and even by the preciſe Number of Years which ſhould intervene.

* THE Prophets having given various Marks of the *Meſſias* who was to come, it ſeem'd neceſſary that theſe Marks ſhould all concur at the ſame Period. Thus 'twas neceſſary that the fourth Monarchy ſhould be eſtabliſh'd e'er the Expiration of *Daniel*'s ſeventy Weeks; that the Scepter ſhould then depart from *Judah*, and that the *Meſſias* ſhould then immediately appear. In Purſuit of which Predictions, our *Lord* appear'd at this Juncture, and demonſtrated his Claim to the Stile and Character of the *Meſſias*.

* IT is foretold, that under the fourth Monarchy, before the Deſtruction of the ſecond Temple, before the Dominion of the *Jews* was taken away, and in the ſeventieth of *Daniel*'s Weeks, the Heathens ſhould be led into the Knowledge of the only true GOD, worſhipp'd by the *Jews*; that

that thoſe who ſincerely fear'd and lov'd him ſhould be delivered from their Enemies, and ſhould be repleniſh'd with higher Degrees of his Fear and Love.

WE ſee the Event anſwer in all Points. During the Time of the fourth Monarchy, before the Deſtruction of the ſecond Temple, *&c.* the Pagans in Multitudes adored the true GOD, and embraced a Life altogether ſpiritual and angelick; Women conſecrated to Religion their Virginity, and their Life; Men voluntary renounced all the Pleaſures and Enjoyments of Senſe. That which *Plato* was unable to effect upon a few Perſons, and thoſe the wiſeſt and beſt inſtituted of his Time, a ſecret Force, by the Help only of a few Words, now wrought upon Thouſands of ignorant uneducated Men.

WHAT means this prodigious Change? It is no other than was foretold ſo many Ages ſince. *Effundam Spiritum meum ſuper omnem Carnem.* * The whole World, which lay enſlaved to Luſt and Unbelief, was now ſurprizingly inflamed with the Fire of Charity. Princes reſign'd their Crowns; the rich abandon'd their Poſſeſſions; the Daughters, with an aſtoniſhing Courage, contended for the Prize of Martyrdom;

* Joel ii. 28.

tyrdom: the Sons forſook their Parents and Habitations, to embrace the Solitude of Deſerts. Whence ſprings this unknown and inviſible Force? The *Meſſias* is arrived, behold the Effects and the Tokens of his Coming.

FOR two thouſand Years together the GOD of the *Jews* remain'd unknown to an infinite Variety of Nations overſpread with Paganiſm. Yet, at the preciſe Time foretold, the Pagans in all Nations adore this only true GOD: The Idol Temples are every where deſtroy'd: Kings themſelves ſubmit their Scepters to the Croſs. What new Thing is this? It is the Spirit of GOD pour'd out upon all the Earth.

IT was teſtified that the *Meſſias* ſhould come to eſtabliſh a new Covenant with his * People; ſuch as might make them forget their Departure out of *Egypt*, in Compariſon with this greater Deliverance: That he would put his Law and his Fear into their † Hearts; both which reſted before in Externals only.

THAT the *Jews* ſhould reject our *Lord*; and ſhould themſelves be rejected of God, ‡ the beloved Vine bringing forth only Wild Grapes. That the choſen People ſhould prove diſloyal, ungrateful, and incredulous.

Populus

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* Jer. xxiii. 7. † Iſai. li. 7. Jer. xxxii. 40. ‡ Iſai. v. 2, 3, 4.

Populus non credens & contradicens.[1] That God ſhould ſtrike them with Blindneſs; [2]and that, like Blind Men, they ſhould ſtumble at Noon-Day.

THAT the Church ſhould be narrow in its Beginning[3], and ſhould afterwards diffuſe itſelf to a prodigious Extent.

THAT Idolatry ſhould then be extirpated[4]: That the *Meſſias* ſhould vanquiſh and expel the falſe Deities, and reduce Men to the Worſhip of the true GOD.

THAT the Idol Temples ſhould be caſt down; and that in all Places of the World[5] Men ſhould offer to God a pure, and holy, and living Sacrifice, in the room of the ſlain Beaſts.

THAT the *Meſſias* ſhould inſtruct Men in the true and perfect Way.

THAT he ſhould reign over the *Jews* and Gentiles.

No Perſon before or ſince our *Lord* has been known to teach any Thing which bears the leaſt Affinity to theſe Predictions.

* AFTER ſo many Meſſengers ſent to notify his Coming, the *Meſſias* was pleas'd himſelf to appear, with all the aſſur'd Evidences of the Perſon, and all the concurring Circumſtances of the Time. He came to inform Men, that

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[1] Iſai. lxv. 2. [2] Deut. xxvii. 28, 29. [3] Ezek. xvii. [4] Ezek. xxx. 13. [5] Mal. i. 11.

they had properly no other Enemies than themſelves; or, than thoſe Paſſions which ſeparated them from GOD: That his Office was to ſet them free from theſe Enemies; to ſtrengthen them with his Grace; to unite them all in one holy Church; to reconcile Jews and Gentiles, by deſtroying the Superſtition of the former, and the Idolatry of the latter.

WHAT the Prophets have farther intimated, my Apoſtles (might he ſay) ſhall ſhortly accompliſh. The *Jews* are on the Point of being rejected; and the Deſolation of *Jeraſalem* draws nigh: The Gentiles ſhall ſoon be admitted to the Knowledge of the true God; and theſe my Apoſtles ſhall be their Introducers, when you ſhall have firſt extinguiſhed your Title by ſlaying the Heir of the Vineyard.

AND the Iſſue of all this was, that the Apoſtles accordingly pronounced the Sentence of Rejection on the *Jews*, and declared the glad Tidings of Acceptance and Salvation to the Gentiles.

AND yet, thro' the Power of natural Concupiſcence, was this moſt divine Undertaking oppoſed by the united Force of all Mankind. This King of *Jews* and *Gentiles* was denied, was oppreſſed, by both equally conſpiring againſt his Life. Whatever is wont to ſtyle itſelf great in the World, attack'd this Re-

Religion in its very Infancy, the Learned, the Wiſe, and the Princes of the Earth. The firſt perſecuted it with their Pen; the ſecond with their Tongue; the laſt with their Sword. But in ſpight of all Oppoſition, within how little a Space do we behold our *Lord* reigning victoriouſly over his Enemies of every Kind? and deſtroying as well the Jewiſh as the Gentile Worſhip, each in its chief Seat and Metropolis, *Jeruſalem* and *Rome*, planting in one of them the firſt, in the other the greateſt of Churches?

PERSONS of mean Endowments, and of no Authority or Strength, ſuch as were the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians, bore up againſt all the Powers of the Earth; overcame the Learned, the Wiſe, and the Mighty; gave a total Subverſion to the Idol Worſhip, which had ſo firmly eſtabliſh'd itſelf in the World. And all this was brought to paſs by the ſole Virtue and Influence of that divine Word which foretold our *Lord*'s Appearance.

* THE *Jews* in putting to Death *JESUS CHRIST*, whom they believed not to be the *Meſſias*, gave him the final Mark and Aſſurance of the *Meſſias*'s Character. The more they perſiſted in denying him, they ſtill became the more infallible Witneſſes of his Truth: For to diſown, and to ſlay him, was but to join their own Teſtimony to that of the Prophecies, which they fulfill'd.

*WHO is ſo ignorant, as not to diſtinguiſh and acknowledge our *Lord*, after the numerous prophetical Tokens and Circumſtances of his Hiſtory? For it was expreſly declared,

[1]THAT he ſhould have one ſpecial Meſſenger and Fore-runner:

[2]THAT he ſhould be born an Infant:

[3]THAT his Birth-place ſhould be the City of *Bethlehem*; that he ſhould ſpring from the Tribe of *Judah*, and Houſe of *David*; that he ſhould exhibit himſelf more eſpecially at *Jeruſalem.*

[4]THAT he ſhould veil the Eyes of the Wiſe and Learned, and preach the Goſpel to the Poor; that he ſhould reſtore Sight to the Blind, Health to the Diſeaſed, and Light to thoſe who languiſhed under Darkneſs.

[5]THAT he ſhould teach the true and perfect Way, and ſhould be the great Inſtructor of the Gentiles:

[6]THAT he ſhould offer himſelf as a Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World.

[7]THAT he ſhould be the chief Corner-Stone, elect and precious.

[8]THAT he ſhould at the ſame Time, be a Stone of Stumbling and Rock of Offence.

[9]THAT

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[1] Mal. iii. 1. [2] Iſai. ix. 6. [3] Mich. v. 2. [4] Iſai. vi. 8. 29. [5] Iſai. xlii. 5. [6] Iſai. liii. [7] Iſai. xxviii. 16. [8] Iſai. viii. 14.

[9] THAT the *Jews* ſhould fall upon this Rock.

[10] THAT this Stone ſhould be rejected by the Builders; ſhould be made by GOD the Head of the Corner,[11] ſhould grow into a great Mountain, and fill the whole Earth.[12]

[13] THAT the *Meſſias* ſhould be diſown'd, rejected, betray'd, ſold, buffetted, derided, afflicted by a thouſand different Methods; that they ſhould give him Gall to eat, ſhould pierce his Hand and his Feet, ſhould ſtrike him on the Face, ſhould kill him, and caſts Lots upon his Veſture.[14]

[15] THAT he ſhould riſe again the third Day from the Dead.

[16] THAT he ſhould aſcend into Heaven, and ſit at the Right Hand of GOD.

[17] THAT Kings ſhould arm themſelves to oppoſe his Authority.

[18] THAT ſitting at the Right Hand of the Father, he ſhould triumph over all his Enemies.

[19] THAT the Kings of the Earth ſhould fall down before him, and all Nations do him Homage and Service.

[20] THAT the *Jews* ſhould ſtill remain.

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[9] Iſai. viii. 15. [10] Pſ. cxviii. [11] Ib. [12] Dan. ii. 35. [13] Zach. xi. 12. [14] Pſal. lxix. 21. xxii. 17, 18. [15] Pſ. xvi. 10. [16] Hoſ. vi. 3. Pſal. cx. 2. [17] Pſal. ii. 2. [18] Pſal. cx. 1. [19] Iſai. lx. 10. [20] Jer. xxxi. 36.

[21] THAT they ſhould remain in a wandring and deſolate Condition, without Princes, without Sacrifices, without Altars, without Prophets; ever hoping for Safety, and ever diſappointed of their Hope.

* IT was neceſſary, according to the Prophetical Deſcriptions, that the *Meſſias*, by his own Strength, ſhould gather to himſelf a numerous People, Elect, Sacred, and Peculiar; ſhould govern and ſupport them; ſhould lead them into a Place of Reſt and of Holineſs; ſhould preſent them blameleſs before GOD; ſhould make them Temples of the divine Preſence; ſhould deliver them from the Wrath of GOD, and reſtore them to his Favour; ſhould reſcue them from the Tyranny of Sin, which ſo viſibly reign'd over *Adam*'s Poſterity; that he ſhould give Laws to his People, and ſhould grave theſe Laws in their Hearts, and write them in their Minds; that he ſhould be at once a Holy Prieſt, and a Spotleſs Sacrifice; and that, while he offered to GOD Bread and Wine, he ſhould no leſs offer his own Body and Blood. Each of theſe Particulars have we ſeen exactly performed by *JESUS CHRIST*,

AGAIN, it was foretold that he ſhould come as a mighty Deliverer; that he ſhould bruize

[21] Hoſ. iii. 4. Amos, Iſai.

bruize *Satan*'s Head, and ſhould redeem his People from their Sins; *Ab omnibus Iniquitatibus*. That there ſhould be a new and an eternal Covenant, and another Prieſthood for ever, after the Order of *Melchiſedec*: That the *Meſſias* ſhould be powerful, mighty and glorious; and yet ſo weak, ſo miſerable, and ſo contemptible, as not to be diſtinguiſhed or credited, but rejected and ſlain; That the People who thus rejected him, ſhould be no more a People: That the Gentiles ſhould receive him, and truſt in him: That he ſhould remove from the Hill of *Sion*, and reign in the chief Seats of idolatrous Worſhip: And that the *Jews* ſhould nevertheleſs continue for ever. Laſtly, that he ſhould ariſe out of *Judah*, and at the perciſe Time, when the Scepter was departed from them.

* THE Prophets have interwoven particular Prophecies with thoſe concerning the *Meſſias*: That neither the Prophecies concerning the *Meſſias* ſhould be without their Proof; nor the particular Prophecies without their Fruit.

* *NON habemus regem, niſi Cæſarem*, ſaid the *Jews*. Therefore *JESUS CHRIST* was the *Meſſias*; becauſe their Scepter was departed to a Stranger; and becauſe they would admit of no other King.

* *DANIEL*'s ſeventy Weeks are render'd diſputable, as to their Beginning by the Terms of the Prophecy; and, as to their End, by the Difference of Chronologiſts. And yet all this Variety, taken together, amounts to no more than the Space of two hundred Years.

*[1] THE ſame Prophecies which repreſent our Lord as under Poverty and Contempt, deſcribe him likewiſe as the Prince and Maſter of the World.

THOSE Prophecies which expreſs the Time of our Lord's Coming, deſcribe him as upon Earth, and in the Condition of a Sufferer; not, as in the Clouds, and in the Majeſty of a Judge; and thoſe which repreſent him in Glory, and judging the Nations, give not the leaſt Mark whereby to determine the Seaſon of his Appearance.

*[2] WHEN the Scriptures ſpeak of the *Meſſias* as great, and triumphant, and glorious, 'tis evident they are to be underſtood of his coming to judge the World, not to redeem it.

XVI.

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[1] Iſai. liii. Zach. ix. 9. [2] Iſai. lxv. 15, 16.

XVI.

Divers Proofs of JESUS CHRIST.

IN refuſing to give Credit to the Apoſtles, it is neceſſary we ſhould ſuppoſe one of theſe two Things, either that they were deceiv'd themſelves, or that they had an Intention of deceiving others. As to the firſt, it ſeems next to impoſſible that Men ſhould be abuſed into a Belief of a Perſon's riſing from the Dead. And as for the other, the Suppoſition of their being Impoſtors, is loaded with Abſurdities of every Kind. Let us be at the Pains of examining its Proceſs: We are, then, to conceive theſe twelve Men, after the Death of their Maſter, combining to delude the whole World with a Report of his Reſurrection. As they could not embark in this Deſign without bringing upon their Heads all the Oppoſition of united Strength and Power; ſo the Heart of Man has a ſtrange Inclination towards Lightneſs and Change, towards cloſing with the Bribes of Promiſes and Rewards. Now ſhould ſo much as any

one of them have been drawn from his Reſolution by theſe Charms, or have been ſhaken by Priſons, by Tortures, or by Death itſelf, all had been undone beyond Recovery. This Conſideration, if purſued, cannot fail of appearing with great Weight and Advantage.

* While their Lord continued amongſt them, his Preſence might encourage and ſupport them: But afterwards what could poſſibly engage them to proceed, except his real Appearance and Return?

* The Style of the Goſpel is admirable in a thouſand different Views; and in this amongſt others, that we meet there with no Invectives, on the Part of the Hiſtorians, againſt *Judas*, or *Pilate*, nor againſt any of the Enemies, or the very Murtherers of their Lord.

Had the Modeſty and Temper of the Evangelical Writers been affected, like the many Strokes of Art, which we admire in vulgar Hiſtory; and had they deſign'd it only to be taken Notice of, either they could not have forborn to give ſome Inſinuation of it themſelves; or, at leaſt, they would have procur'd Friends who ſhould obſerve it to their Advantage and Honour. But as they acted without any Manner of Affectation, and with altogether diſin-

diſintereſted Motions, they never took care to provide any Perſon who ſhould make theſe Reflections in their Favour. This, I believe, is what no Man has hitherto remark'd, and yet what ſeems an admirable Evidence of the great Simplicity us'd in this whole Affair.

* As our Lord perform'd Miracles in Perſon, and his Apoſtles after him, ſo many others were wrought by the holy Men in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity; becauſe the Prophecies being, in ſome Meaſure, ſtill imperfect, till they ſhould receive an Accompliſhment from their Hands, their Miracles were the only ſufficient Teſtimony of their Commiſſion. It was foretold that the *Meſſias* ſhould convert the Gentiles. But now the Gentiles could not be converted to the *Meſſias*, without beholding this final Effect of the Prophecies concerning him. Before, therefore, that he dy'd, and roſe again, and that the Gentiles were converted through his Name, all was not yet fulfill'd. So that a conſtant Series of Miracles was neceſſary during this Period. But in our Days there is no Need of miraculous Performances to evince the Truth of our Chriſtian Faith; in as much as the full Completion of the Prophecies is a ſtanding and perpetual Miracle.

* ANO-

* ANOTHER ſignal Confirmation of our Faith is the preſent Condition of the *Jews*. 'Tis aſtoniſhing to ſee this People, during ſo vaſt a Courſe of Years, never extinguiſh'd, and yet ever miſerable; it being alike neceſſary to the Demonſtration of the *Meſſias*, both that they ſhould ſubſiſt to be his Witneſſes, and ſhould be miſerable, as having been his Crucifiers. And tho' to ſubſiſt, and to be miſerable, are Contrarieties ungrateful to Nature, yet they fail not to maintain their Subſiſtence, under all the Power of their Miſery.

BUT were they not reduced to almoſt the ſame Extremities, during their Captive Eſtate? No: The Scepter and Regal Line was not in the leaſt interrupted by their Captivity in *Babylon*; becauſe their happy Return was expreſly promis'd and determin'd. When *Nabuchodonoſor* carried away the People, for fear they ſhould imagine the Scepter to have then departed from *Judah*, they were before-hand aſſured, that they ſhould ſojourn but a few Years, and at the End of them ſhould certainly be re-eſtabliſh'd. They were never without the Comfort of their Prophets, or the Preſence of their Kings. But the ſecond Ruin of their City and Polity is without Promiſe of a Reſtauration; without Prophets, without Kings, without Comfort, or Hopes; the Scep-

Scepter being now for ever departed from them.

To be detain'd in an Enemy's Country with an Aſſurance of being deliver'd after ſeventy Years, can ſcarce be look'd on as a State of Captivity, in reſpect of a whole People. But their preſent Diſperſion and Baniſhment into ſtrange Lands is not only without Aſſurance, but without the leaſt Hope, of Recovery and Reſtitution.

* WE find it a ſolemn Promiſe of GOD to them, that tho' they ſhould be ſcatter'd to the Corners of the Earth, yet upon their Perſeverance in his Law, he would gather them again. They are now in the higheſt Manner conſtant to their Worſhip, and tenacious of their Rites; and yet remain diſpers'd and diſtreſs'd. It follows therefore, of Neceſſity, that the *Meſſias* is come, and that the Old Law, which contain'd theſe Promiſes, has been diſannull'd by the Eſtabliſhment of the New.

* HAD the *Jews* been entirely converted by our Lord, we ſhould have none but ſuſpected Witneſſes; had they been entirely deſtroy'd, we ſhould have no Witneſſes at all.

* AS the *Jews* rejected Chriſt, but not univerſally, ſo Spiritual Men now embrace him, but not Carnal. And this is ſo far from diminiſhing or impairing his Glory, that

that 'tis the laſt Stroke which perfects and adorns it.

* THE only Argument of the *Jews* which we find inſiſted on in their Writings, the *Talmud*, and the *Rabbins*, is, that *JESUS CHRIST* did not appear as a mighty Prince and Conqueror, did not ſubdue the Nations by the Force and Terror of Arms. *JESUS CHRIST*, ſay they, ſuffer'd and dy'd; he overcame not the Gentiles by Martial Power; he loaded us not with their Spoils; he neither enlarged our Dominions, nor increas'd our Stores. And is this all they have to alledge? This is what we have eſpecially to boaſt. 'Tis in this that he appears ſo peculiarly amiable to my Eyes: I would not wiſh for a *Meſſias* of their Deſcription and Character.

* How lovely a Sight is it, to behold with the Eye of Faith, *Darius*, *Cyrus*, and *Alexander*, the *Romans*, *Pompey*, and *Herod*, all ignorantly conſpiring to advance the Triumphs of the Croſs?

XVII.

Againſt Mahomet.

THE *Mahometan* Religion has for its Foundation the *Alcoran*, and its Compiler *Mahomet*. But now as for this Great Prophet, who was to be the laſt Expectation of Mankind, where do we find him once foretold? Or, what Token has he to ſhew which any Man might as well produce, who ſhould pleaſe to aſſume the Pretenſions of Prophecy? What Miracles does he himſelf tell us that he wrought? What Myſteries does he teach, even according to his own Report and Tradition? What Morality has he eſtabliſh'd? What Felicity has he propoſed?

* *MAHOMET* brings not with him the leaſt Authority or Credentials: His Reaſons therefore ought to be the moſt cogent in the World, as having nothing to ſupport them but their own proper Force.

* Suppose

* SUPPOSE two Perſons ſhould both of them deliver Things in Appearance of a low and mean Character; but ſo that the Diſcourſes of the one ſhould have a two-fold Senſe, underſtood by his Friends and Followers, while thoſe of the other had but one Meaning only: A Stranger, who had not been admitted into the Secret, hearing them ſpeak in this Manner, would be inclined to paſs the ſame Judgment on both. But if afterwards, in the remaining Part of their Converſation, the One ſhould diſcloſe Sublime and Angelical Truths; the other ſhould perſiſt in uttering Things baſe and vulgar, and even fooliſh and impertinent, he muſt conclude that the one ſpake myſteriouſly, and not the other; the one having evidenced, that he is incapable of Abſurdity, and capable of being myſterious; the other, that he is incapable of Myſtery, but very capable of being abſurd.

* IT is not by the obſcurer Parts of *Mahomet*'s Doctrine, and thoſe which bear an Appearance of ſome hidden Meaning, that I would have Perſons judge of the Author; but by thoſe Things which are clear and expreſs, as his Paradice, and the like. 'Tis in theſe that he is moſt peculiarly ridiculous. No ſuch Imputation can paſs on the holy Scriptures. They too, it muſt be confeſs'd, have their Obſcurities, but then

then their plainer Doctrines are admirably juſt and true; and the Prophecies they alledge, are ſuch as have been notoriouſly accompliſh'd. The Caſe, therefore, is as different as can be conceiv'd; nor ought we to compare and confound Things which reſemble each other only in Obſcurity, not in their clear and open Parts; for the latter, when excellent and divine, ſhould engage us to reverence the Obſcurities with which they are attended.

* THE *Alcoran* ſays *Matthew* was a good Man. Hence I argue, that *Mahomet* was a falſe Prophet, either in calling wicked Men good, or in disbelieving theſe good Men, as to what they report of *JESUS CHRIST.*

* WHAT *Mahomet* did, lies within any Man's Reach. He was authorized by no Miracle, he was countenanced by no Prediction. But what was perform'd by *JESUS CHRIST* is abſolutely above the Power and the Imitation of Man.

* *MAHOMET* eſtabliſh'd himſelf by killing; *JESUS CHRIST*, by commanding us to lay down our Lives: *Mahomet*, by forbidding his Law to be read; *JESUS CHRIST*, by engaging us to ſearch and read. In a word, the two Deſigns are in all Reſpects ſo directly oppoſite, that *Mahomet* took the Way, in human Probability, to ſuc-

ceed; *JESUS CHRIST*, humanly ſpeaking, to be diſappointed. And hence, inſtead of ſo irrational a Concluſion, as that becauſe *Mahomet* ſucceeded, *JESUS CHRIST* might in like Manner have ſucceeded before, we ought by the Rule of Contraries to infer, that ſince *Mahomet* has ſucceeded, Chriſtianity muſt inevitably have periſh'd, had it not been founded and ſupported by a Power altogether divine.

XVIII.

For what Reaſons we may preſume it has pleas'd GOD to hide himſelf from ſome, and to diſcloſe himſelf to others.

IT has been the gracious Purpoſe of GOD, to redeem Mankind, and to open a Door of Salvation to thoſe who diligently ſeek him. But Men have ſhewn themſelves ſo unworthy of this Deſign, that he juſtly denies to ſome, on Account of their Obſtinacy, what he grants to others by a Mercy which is not their Due. Were it his Pleaſure

Pleaſure to overbear the Stubborneſs of the moſt harden'd Unbelievers, he could eaſily effect it by diſcovering himſelf ſo manifeſtly to them, as to ſet the Truth of his Exiſtence beyond the Poſſibility of their Diſputes. And it is in this Manner that he will appear at the laſt Day; with ſuch amazing Terrors, and ſuch a Convulſion of all Nature, that the moſt Blind ſhall behold and ſhall confeſs him.

But this is not the Way which he has choſe for his firſt and milder Coming. Becauſe, ſo many Perſons having render'd themſelves thus unworthy of his Mercy, he has left them deprived of a Happineſs which they vouchſafed not to deſire. It had not therefore been conſiſtent with his Juſtice, to aſſume an Appearnce every Way great and divine, and capable of working in all Men an abſolute and undiſtinguiſh'd Conviction: Nor on the other hand, would it have ſeem'd more equitable to have uſed ſo much Privacy and Concealment, as not to be diſcoverable by ſincere Enquirers. So that intending no leſs to reveal himſelf to thoſe who ſought him with their whole Heart, than to hide himſelf from thoſe who were alike induſtrious to fly and avoid him, he has ſo temper'd the Knowledge of himſelf, as to exhibit bright and viſible Indications to thoſe

who ſeek him, and to turn the Pillar of a Cloud towards thoſe who ſeek him not.

* THERE is a due Proportion of Light for thoſe, who above all Things wiſh that they may ſee; and a proper Mixture of Shade, for thoſe who are of a contrary Diſpoſition.

THERE is enough Brightneſs to illuminate the Elect; and enough Obſcurity to humble them.

THERE is Obſcurity enough to blind the Reprobates; and Brightneſs enough to condemn them, and to render them without Excuſe.

DID the World ſubſiſt purely to inform Men of the Being of GOD, his Divinity would ſhine thro' it, with irreſiſtible and unconteſted Rays. But in as much as it ſubſiſts only by *JESUS CHRIST*, and for *JESUS CHRIST*, and to inform Men of their Corruption and Redemption, we read theſe two Leſſons in every Part of its Frame. For all the Objects which we can ſurvey, are ſuch as denote neither the total Excluſion, nor the manifeſt Preſence of GOD; or they denote the Preſence of a *GOD who hides himſelf.* The Face of Nature bears this univerſal Character, and Language.

* HAD Men never been honour'd with the Appearance of GOD, this eternal Privation

tion might have been the Subject of Diſpute, and as well have been interpreted of his utter Abſence from the World, as of human Incapacity to enjoy his Preſence. But by affording ſome, tho' not continual Appearances, he has taken away all Ground of Doubt and Debate. If he has appear'd once, he exiſts for ever. So that we ar obliged jointly to conclude from the whole, the Being of GOD, and the Unworthineſs of Man.

* IT ſeems to be the divine Intention, to perfect the Will rather than the Underſtanding. But now a convincing Light and a perfect Brightneſs, while it aſſiſted the Underſtanding, would foreſtall and defeat the Will.

* WERE there no Intermixture of Darkneſs, Man would not be ſenſible of his Diſeaſe; and were there no Degree of Light, Man would deſpair of a Remedy. So that not only the divine Juſtice, but human Intereſt and Advantage ſeem concern'd that GOD ſhould diſcover himſelf in Part, and conceal himſelf in Part; it being alike dangerous for us to know GOD without apprehending our own Miſery, and to know our own Miſery, without the Apprehenſion of GOD.

* EVERY Thing inſtructs Man in his own Condition; but then this Maxim ought rightly to be underſtood. For 'tis neither true

that GOD altogether diſcovers himſelf, nor that he remains altogether conceal'd. But theſe are moſt conſiſtent Truths, that he hides himſelf from thoſe who tempt him, and diſcloſes himſelf to thoſe who ſeek him. For Men, tho' unworthy of GOD, yet at the ſame Time are capable of GOD. They are unworthy of him by their Corruption; and they are capable of him by their original Perfection.

* THERE's no Object upon Earth which does not ſpeak and proclaim either divine Mercy or human Miſery; either the Impotence of Man unaſſiſted by GOD, or the Power of Man with GOD's Concurrence and Aid.

* THE whole Univerſe teaches Man either that he is diſtemper'd and laps'd, or that he is recover'd and redeem'd. Every Thing informs him either of his Greatneſs, or of his Miſery. The juſt Dereliction of GOD, we may read in the *Pagans*: His merciful Favour and Protection, in the ancient *Jews*.

* ALL Things work together for Good to the Elect; even the Obſcurities of Scripture, which theſe honour and reverence, on Account of that divine Clearneſs and Beauty which they underſtand. And all Things work together for Evil to the Reprobates, even the divine Clearneſs and Beauty of Scrip-

ture; which theſe blaſpheme, on Account of the Obſcurities which they underſtand not.

* HAD the Deſign of our Lord's Coming been the Work of Juſtification only, the whole Series of Scripture, and Diſpoſition of Things would have been directed towards this End: And it had been then the eaſieſt Task in the World to convince an Unbeliever. But ſince he came, as *Iſaiah* prophetically ſpeaks, in *ſanctificationem & in ſcandalum*, perverſe Infidelity is above our Strength to conquer, and our Art to cure. But then this Diſappointment cannot be made an Exception againſt our own Belief: Becauſe we affirm that in all the Conduct and Methods of divine Grace, there is no Conviction for opiniative, obſtinate Spirits, and ſuch as do not ſincerely ſeek the Truth.

* *JESUS CHRIST* is come, that thoſe who ſee not, may ſee; and that thoſe who ſee, may be made blind. He is come to heal the Sick, and to give over the Sound; to call Sinners to Repentance and Juſtification; and to leave thoſe in their Sins, who truſted in themſelves that they were Saints; to fill the Hungry with good Things, and to ſend the Rich empty away.

* IT was to render the *Meſſias* alike the Subject of Knowledge to the Good, and of Error to the Wicked, that it pleas'd GOD

ſo to diſpoſe the Predictions concerning him. For had the *Manner* of his Appearance been expreſly foretold, there would not have been Obſcurity enough to miſlead the worſt of Men. On the other Hand, had the *Time* been ſignified obſcurely, the beſt of Men would have wanted Evidence and Light. For Inſtance; the Integrity of their Heart could never have aſſiſted them in expounding a ſingle ▭ for the Numeral of ſix hundred Years. The *Time*, therefore, was declar'd in poſitive Words; but the *Manner* wrapt up in Shade and Figure.

By this Means the Wicked, apprehending the promiſed Goods to be Temporal, deceiv'd themſelves, notwithſtanding the clear Indications of the Time; while the Righteous avoided this Danger of Miſtake. For the Conſtruction of the promiſed Goods depended on the Heart; which is wont to apply the Name of Good to the Object of its Love: Whereas the Conſtruction of the promiſed Time has no Dependance on the Heart or Affections. And thus the plain Diſcovery of the Time, and the obſcure Deſcription of the Goods or Happineſs expected, could be the Cauſe of Error only to the Wicked.

* What was the Deſign of that Oppoſition in the Marks of the *Meſſias*; that by his Hand the Scepter ſhould be eternally fix'd

fix'd in *Judah;* and that at his Coming the Scepter ſhould be taken from *Judah?*

To evince, *that ſeeing, they ſhould not ſee; and underſtanding, they ſhould not underſtand.* Nothing could have been diſpos'd with more admirable Juſtice and Wiſdom.

* INSTEAD of complaining that GOD is ſo far remov'd from our Search, we ought to give him Thanks that he is ſo obvious to our Diſcovery. Nor ought we leſs to thank him that he ſtill hides himſelf from the Wiſe and the Lofty, from thoſe who are unworthy to know ſo Pure and Holy a GOD.

* THE Genealogy of our Lord in the Old Teſtament is intermix'd with ſo many Things of little Conſequence, that there ſeems to be ſome Difficulty in diſcerning it. Had *Moſes* kept no other Regiſter but that of the Pedigree of *JESUS CHRIST*, the Series muſt have been viſible; and even now, upon a cloſer Inſpection, we may be able to trace it in *Thamar*, *Ruth*, &c.

* THOSE Things in the Goſpels which have the greateſt Appearance of Weakneſs, or Error, are of peculiar Force and Weight with diſcerning Judges. For Inſtance; the different Genealogies of St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke;* it being manifeſt that this could not be done by Confederacy.

* LET Men, therefore, reproach us no more with the Want of perfect Light; for we profeſs ourſelves to want it. But let them own the Power and Truth of Religion in its very Obſcurity, in that Mixture of Darkneſs which ſurrounds us, and that Indifference which we find in ourſelves towards the Knowledge of our Duty.

* WERE there but one Religion in the World, the Diſcoveries of the divine Nature might ſeem too free and open, and with too little Diſtinction: And ſo likewiſe, if there were Martyrs in no Religion but the true.

* *JESUS CHRIST*, to leave the Impious in their Blindneſs, never expreſly told them, that he was not of *Nazareth*, or that he was not the Son of *Joſeph*.

* As our Lord remain'd unknown amongſt Men, ſo Truth remains amongſt vulgar Opinions, undiſtinguiſh'd as to external Appearance. In like Manner, the Holy Euchariſt differs not outwardly from common Bread.

* IF the Mercy of GOD be ſo abundant, as to afford us all ſaving Knowledge, even while he hides himſelf; what immenſe Light may we expect, when he ſhall pleaſe to unveil his Perfections?

* WE can underſtand nothing of the Works of GOD, if we do not ſettle this

as

as a Principle, that blinds and infatuates ſome, while he inſpires and illuminates others.

XIX.

That the True Profeſſors of Judaiſm *and of* Chriſtianity *have ever been of one and the ſame Religion.*

THE *Jewiſh* Religion ſeems at firſt View to conſiſt, as to its very Eſſence, in the Paternity of *Abraham*, in the Rite of Circumciſion, in Sacrifices, in Ceremonies, in the Ark, in the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, or, briefly, in the Law and the Covenant of *Moſes*.

BUT we offer to maintain that it conſiſted in none of theſe, but purely in the Love of GOD; and that beſides this, nothing ever obtain'd the divine Approbation and Acceptance.

THAT GOD bore no Manner of Regard to *Iſrael after the Fleſh*, to thoſe who proceeded out of the Loins of *Abraham*.

THAT the *Jews*, if they tranſgreſs'd, were to be puniſh'd after the Manner of Strangers. *And it ſhall be, that if thou do at all forget the LORD thy GOD, and walk after other Gods, and ſerve them, and worſhip them; I teſtify againſt you this Day, that ye ſhall ſurely periſh: As the Nations which the LORD deſtroyeth before your Face, ſo ſhall ye periſh*[1].

THAT Strangers, if they loved GOD, were to be received by him on the ſame Terms with the *Jews*.

THAT thoſe who were *Jews* in Truth and Reality aſcribed all their Merit and Pretenſions not to *Abraham*, but to GOD: *Doubtleſs thou art our Father, tho'* Abraham *be ignorant of us, and* Iſrael *knoweth us not: Thou art our Father and our Redeemer.*[2]

MOSES himſelf aſſured his Nation, that GOD was no Excepter of Perſons; *the LORD your GOD*, ſays he, *regardeth not Perſons, nor taketh Rewards.*[3]

WE affirm that the Circumciſion enjoin'd, was that of the Heart: *Circumciſe therefore the Foreskin of your Heart, and be no more ſtiff-neck'd. For the LORD your GOD is a great GOD, a mighty, and a terrible, who regardeth not Perſons*[4], &c.

THAT

[1] Deut. viii. 19, 20. [2] Iſai. lxiii. 16. [3] Deut. x. 17. [4] Deut. x. 16, 17. Jer. iv. 4.

THAT GOD particularly promis'd to beſtow on them this Grace of ſpiritual Circumciſion: *And the LORD thy GOD will circumciſe thy Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed, to love the LORD thy GOD with all thy Heart.*[5]

THAT the Uncircumciſed in Heart ſhall be judged of GOD: *For GOD will judge all the Nations which are Uncircumciſed; and all the People of* Iſrael, *becauſe they are Uncircumciſed in Heart.*[6]

WE ſay, that Circumciſion was purely a Figure, inſtituted to diſtinguiſh the People of the *Jews* from all other Nations.[7] And this was the Reaſon that they uſed it not in the Wilderneſs, becauſe there was then no Danger of their mixing with Strangers; as alſo that ſince the Appearance of our *LORD* it is become altogether unneceſſary.

THAT the Love of GOD is, every where, principally commanded and enforced: *I call Heaven and Earth to record this Day againſt you, that I have ſet before you Life and Death, Bleſſing and Curſing; therefore chooſe Life, that both thou and thy Seed may live; that thou may'ſt love the LORD thy GOD, and that thou may'ſt obey his Voice, and that thou may'ſt cleave unto him; for he is thy Life*[8], &c.

IT

[5] Deut. xxx. 6. [6] Jerem. ix. 25, 26. [7] Geneſ. xvii. 1. [8] Deut. xxx. 19, 20.

IT was declared, that the *Jews* for want of this Love of GOD, ſhould be abandon'd to their Sins, and the Gentiles admitted in their ſtead: *I will hide my Face from them, I will ſee what their End ſhall be; for they are a very froward Generation, Children in whom is no Faith. They have mov'd me to Jealouſy with that which is not GOD, they have provoked me to Anger with their Vanities; and I will move them to Jealouſy with thoſe which are not a People, I will provoke them to Anger with a fooliſh Nation.*[9]

THAT Temporal Goods are falſe and vain; and that the only true and laſting Good is the divine Acceptance and Favour.[10]

THAT the Feaſts of the *Jews* were diſpleaſing to GOD.[11]

THAT their Sacrifices[12] were no leſs diſagreeable. And not only thoſe of the Wicked, but even of the Good; as appears from the fiftieth *Pſalm*; where before the Diſcourſe is peculiarly addreſs'd to the Wicked by thoſe Words, *Peccatori autem dixit Deus*, it is declared abſolutely that GOD has no Regard to the Fleſh or the Blood of Beaſts.

THAT the Offerings of the Gentiles ſhould be receiv'd by GOD; and that he ſhould

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[9] Deut. xxxii. 20, 21. Iſai. lxv. [10] Pſ. lxxiii. 28. [11] Amos v. 2. [12] Iſai. lxvii. Jerem. vi. 20.

ſhould withdraw his Acceptance from the Offerings of the *Jews*.[13]

THAT GOD would make a new Covenant by the *Meſſias*;[14] and that the old Covenant ſhould be diſannull'd.

THAT the old Things ſhould be univerſally forgotten, and ſhould paſs away.[15]

THAT the Ark of the Covenant ſhould come no more to mind.[16]

THAT the Temple ſhould be given up and deſtroy'd.[17]

THAT the legal Sacrifices ſhould be aboliſh'd, and Sacrifices of a purer Kind eſtabliſh'd in their room.[18]

THAT the *Aaronical* Order of Prieſthood ſhould be diſſolv'd; and the Order of *Melchiſedec* introduc'd by the *Meſſias*.[19]

THAT this latter Prieſthood ſhould be an Ordinance for ever.[20]

THAT *Jeruſalem* ſhould be reprobated, and a new Name given to the Elect People.[21]

THAT this new Name ſhould be more excellent than that of the *Jews*, and of eternal Duration.[22]

THAT

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[13] Mal. i. 11. 1 Kings xv. 22. Hoſ. vi. 6. [14] Jer. xxxi. 31. [15] Iſai. xliii. 18, 19. [16] Jerem. iii. 6. [17] Jer. vii. 12, 13, 14. [18] Mal. i. 10. [19] Pſal. cx. [20] Ibid. [21] Iſai. lxv. [22] Iſai. lvi. 5.

THAT the *Jews* ſhould remain without Prophets, without Kings, without Sacrifices, and without an Altar;[23] and ſhould nevertheleſs ſubſiſt as a diſtinct People.

XX.

That GOD is not known to Advantage, but thro' JESUS CHRIST.

THE greateſt Part of thoſe who attempt to demonſtrate the Truth of the divine Being to the Ungodly and Prophane, commonly begin with the Works of Nature; and in this Method they very rarely ſucceed. I would not ſeem to impair the Validity of theſe Proofs, which have been conſecrated by the holy Scripture itſelf. They have indeed an undeniable Agreement with the Principles of ſound Reaſon; but are very often not ſo well ſuited and proportion'd to that Diſpoſition of Spirit which is peculiar to the Perſons here deſcribed.

FOR we muſt obſerve, that Diſcourſes of this Kind are not ordinarily addreſs'd to Men

[23] Hoſ. iii. 4.

Men whoſe Hearts abound with a lively Faith, and who immediately diſcern the whole Syſtem of Things to be no other than the Workmanſhip of that GOD whom they adore. To theſe *the Heavens declare the Glory of GOD*, and all Nature ſpeaks in Behalf of its Author. But as for thoſe in whom this Light is extinct, and in whom we endeavour to revive it, Perſons who are deſtitute of Faith and Charity, and who behold nothing but Clouds and Darkneſs on the whole Face of Nature, it ſeems not the moſt probable Method of their Converſion, to offer them nothing more on a Subject of the laſt Importance, than the Courſe of the Moon or Planets; or than ſuch Arguments as they every Day hear, and every Day deſpiſe. The Hardneſs and Obſtinacy of their Temper has render'd them deaf to this Voice of Nature, which ſounds continually in their Ears; and Experience informs us, that inſtead of our gaining them by ſuch a Proceſs, there's nothing which, on the contrary, is ſo great a Diſcouragement, and ſo apt to make them deſpair of ever finding the Truth, as when we undertake to convince them by this Way of Reaſoning, and pretend to tell them that Truth ſhines ſo bright in theſe Views, as to become really irreſiſtible.

THE Holy Scripture, which knows ſo much better than we the Things which belong to GOD, never ſpeaks of them in this Manner. It informs us, indeed, that the Beauty of the Creature leads to the Knowledge of the Creator; but it does by no Means aſſure us that the Creatures produce this Effect indifferently in all Perſons. On the contrary, it declares, that whenever they appear thus convincing, it is not by their own Force, but by Means of that Light which GOD diffuſeth into the Hearts of thoſe to whom he is pleas'd to diſcover himſelf by their Means and Invention: *Quod notum eſt Dei manifeſtum eſt in illis: Deus enim illis manifeſtavit.* It teacheth, in general, that our GOD is *a GOD who hideth himſelf; verè tu es Deus abſconditus:* And that ſince the Corruption of human Nature, he has left Men under ſuch a Blindneſs as they can only be deliver'd from by *JESUS CHRIST*; without whom we are cut off from all Communication with the Divinity: *Nemo novit Patrem niſi Filius, aut cui voluerit Filius revelare.*

THE Scripture gives us a farther Evidence of this Truth, when it ſo often teſtifies that GOD is found by thoſe who ſeek him; for it could never ſpeak thus of a clear and certain Light, ſuch as gives not Men the Trouble of ſearching after it, but freely

freely diffuſeth itſelf around, and prevents the Obſervation of the Beholders.

* The Metaphyſical Proofs of God are ſo very intricate, and ſo far removed from the common Reaſonings of Men, that they ſtrike with little Force: Or, at beſt, the Impreſſion continues but a ſhort Space, and Men, the very next Hour, fall back into their old Jealouſies, and their perpetual Fear and Suſpicion of being deceiv'd: *Quod curioſitate cognoverant ſuperbia amiſerunt.*

Again, all the Arguments of this abſtracted Kind are able to lead us no farther than to a ſpeculative Knowledge of God; and to know him only thus, is, in Effect, not to know him at all.

The God of Chriſtians is not barely the ſupreme and infallible Author of Geometrical Truths, or of the Elementary Order, and the Diſpoſition of Nature: This is the Divinity of Philoſophers and *Pagans*. Nor barely the providential Diſpoſer of the Lives and Fortunes of Men, ſo as to crown his Worſhippers with a long and happy Series of Years: This was the Portion of the *Jews*. But the God of *Abraham* and of *Iſaac*, the God of Chriſtians, is a God of Love and Conſolation; a God who poſſeſſeth the Hearts and Souls of his Servants; gives them an inward Feeling of their own Miſery, and of his infinite Mercy; unites

himſelf to their Spirit, repleniſhing it with Humility and Joy, with Affiance and Love; and renders them incapable of any Proſpect, any Aim, but himſelf.

THE GOD of Chriſtians is a GOD who makes the Soul perceive and know that he is her only Good, and that ſhe can find Peace and Repoſe in him alone; no Delight, no Joy, but in his Love; and who at the ſame Time inſpires her with an Abhorrence of thoſe Obſtacles and Impediments which withhold her from loving him with all her Strength. As her two principal Hindrances, Self-love and Concupiſcence, are grievous and inſupportable to her; ſo it is this gracious GOD who makes her know and feel that ſhe has theſe fatal Diſtempers rooted in her Conſtitution, and that his Hand alone can expel or ſubdue them.

THIS is to know GOD as a Chriſtian. But to know him after this Manner, we muſt at the ſame Time know our own Miſery and Unworthineſs, together with the Need we have of a Mediator, in Order to our approaching his Preſence, or uniting ourſelves to him. We ought by no Means to ſeparate theſe Parts of Knowledge; becauſe each alone is not only unprofitable, but dangerous. The Knowledge of GOD, without the Knowledge of our own Miſery, is

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the Nurſe of Pride. The Knowledge of our own Miſery without the Knowledge of *JESUS CHRIST* is the Mother of Deſpair. But the true Knowledge of *JESUS CHRIST* exempts us alike from Pride and from Deſpair; by giving us, at once, a Sight not only of GOD, and of our Miſery, but alſo of the Mercy of GOD in the Relief of our Miſery.

WE may know GOD without knowing our own Miſeries; or we may know our own Miſeries without knowing GOD; or we may know both, without knowing the Means of obtaining from GOD the Relief of our Miſeries. But we cannot know *JESUS CHRIST* without the Knowledge of GOD, of our Miſeries, and of their Cure. IN as much as *JESUS CHRIST* is not only GOD, but he is GOD under this Character, the Healer and Repairer of our Miſeries.

THUS all they who ſeek GOD without *JESUS CHRIST* can never meet with ſuch Light in their Enquiries as may afford them true Satisfaction, or ſolid Uſe. For either they advance not ſo far as to know that there is a GOD; or if they do, yet they arrive hereby but at an unprofitable Knowledge, becauſe they frame to themſelves a Method of communicating with GOD; without a Mediator, as without a Mediator

they were capable of knowing him: So that they unavoidably fall either into Atheiſm, or Deiſm, Things which the Chriſtian Religion does almoſt equally deteſt and abhor.

WE ought therefore wholly to direct our Enquiries to the Knowledge of *JESUS CHRIST*, becauſe 'tis by him alone that we can pretend to know GOD, in ſuch a Manner as ſhall be really advantageous to us.

HE alone is the true GOD to us *Men*, that is, to miſerable and ſinful Creatures: He is our chief Centre and ſupreme Object, in reſpect of all that we can wiſh, and all that we can underſtand. Whoever knows not him, knows nothing either in the Order of the World or in his own Nature and Condition. For as we know GOD only by *JESUS CHRIST*, ſo 'tis by him alone that we know ourſelves.

WITHOUT *JESUS CHRIST* Man is, of Neceſſity, to be conſider'd as lying in Vice and Miſery: With *JESUS CHRIST* Man appears as releas'd from Vice, and redeem'd from Miſery. In him conſiſts all our Happineſs, and all our Virtue, our Life and Light, our Hope and Aſſurance: Out of him there is no Proſpect but of Sins and Miſeries, of Darkneſs and Deſpair; nothing to be beheld by us but Obſcurity and Confuſion in the divine Nature, and in our own.

XXI.

XXI.

The ſtrange Contrarieties diſcoverable in Human Nature, with regard to Truth and Happineſs, and many other Things.

NOTHING can be more aſtoniſhing in the Nature of Man, than the Contrarieties which we there obſerve, with regard to all Things. He is made for the Knowledge of Truth: This is what he moſt ardently deſires, and moſt eagerly purſues; yet when he endeavours to lay hold on it, he is ſo dazzled and confounded, as never to be ſecure of actual Poſſeſſion. Hence the two Sects of the *Pyrrhonians*, and the Dogmatiſts took their Riſe; of which the one would utterly deprive Men of all Truth; the other would infallibly enſure their Enquiries after it: But each with ſo improbable Reaſons, as only to encreaſe our Confuſion and Perplexity, while we are guided by no other Lights than thoſe which we find in our own Boſom.

THE principal Arguments of the *Pyrrhonians*, or Scepticks, are as follow. If we accept Faith and Revelation, we can have no other Certainty as to the Truth of Principles, than that we naturally feel and perceive them within ourſelves. But now this inward Perception is no convictive Evidence of their Truth; becauſe, ſince without Faith we have no Aſſurance whether we were made by a good GOD, or by ſome evil Dæmon; nay, whether we have not exiſted from Eternity, or been the Offspring of Chance. It may be doubted whether theſe Principles within us are true or falſe, or uncertain in Correſpondence to our Original. Indeed, 'tis by Faith alone which we can diſtinguiſh whether we are aſleep or awake; becauſe in our Sleep we as ſtrongly fancy ourſelves to be waking as when we really are ſo: We imagine that we ſee Space, Figure, and Motion; We perceive the Time paſs away; we meaſure it as it runs. In fine, we act, to all Intents, as in our moſt wakeful Hours. Since then, by our own Confeſſion, one half of our Life is ſpent in Sleep, during which, whatever we may ſuppoſe, we have really no Idea of Truth, all that then paſſeth within us being meer Illuſion. Who can tell but that the other Moiety of our Life, in which we fancy ourſelves to be awake, is no more than a ſecond Sleep, little

little differing from the former; and that we only rouze ourſelves from our Sleep by Day when we enter into that at Night; as 'tis uſual with us to dream that we dream, by heaping one fantaſtick Image upon another?

I WAVE the whole Diſcourſe of the ſame Sect, againſt the Impreſſions of Cuſtom, Education, Manners, and Climates, with other the like Prejudices; which they obſerve to govern the greateſt Part of Mankind, who are wont to reaſon on no other than theſe falſe Foundations.

THE main Fort of the Dogmatiſts is this, that, would we but ſpeak honeſtly and ſincerely, there's no Man who can doubt of natural Principles. We are capable of Truth, ſay they, not only by Reaſoning, but by Perception, and by a bright and lively Act of immediate Intelligence. 'Tis by this latter Way that we arrive at the Knowledge of firſt Principles; which the Forces of Reaſon would attack in vain, as here acting beyond the Province and Commiſſion. The Scepticks who labour to bring all Things to their own Standard, are under a continual Diſappointment. We may be very well aſſured of our being awake, tho' very unable to demonſtrate it by Reaſon. This Inability ſhews indeed the Feebleneſs of our rational Powers, but not the

the general Incertitude of our Knowledge. We apprehend with no leſs Confidence that there are ſuch Things in the World as Space, Time, Motion, Number, and Matter, than the moſt regular and demonſtrative Concluſions. Nay, it is upon this Certainty of Perception and Intellection, that Reaſon ought to fix itſelf, and to found the whole Method of its Proceſs. I perceive that there are three Dimenſions in Space, and that Number is infinite: Hence my Reaſon demonſtrates, that there are no two ſquare Numbers aſſignable, one of which ſhall exactly double the other. We apprehend Principles, and we conclude Propoſitions: And both with the like Aſſurance, tho' by different Ways. Nor is it leſs ridiculous for Reaſon to demand of theſe perceptive and intellective Faculties, a Proof of their Maxims e're it conſents to them; that it would be for the ſaid Faculties to demand of Reaſon a clear Perception and Intuition of all the Problems it demonſtrates. This Defect, therefore, may ſerve to the Humbling of Reaſon, which pretends to be the Judge of all Things, but not to the ſhaking of Certainty, as if Reaſon were alone able to inform our Judgment. On the contrary, it were to be wiſhed that we had leſs Occaſion for rational Deductions; and that we knew

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all Things by Inſtinct and immediate View. But Nature has denied us this Favour, and allows us but few Notices of ſo eaſy a kind, leaving us to work out the reſt by laborious Conſequences, and a continued Series of Argument.

WE ſee here a univerſal War proclaim'd amongſt Mankind. We muſt of Neceſſity liſt ourſelves on one Side or on the other: For he that pretends to ſtand neuter is moſt effectually of the *Pyrrhonian* Party: This Neutrality conſtitutes the very Eſſence of *Pyrrhoniſm*; and he that is not againſt the Scepticks, muſt be, in a ſuperlative Manner for them. What ſhall a Man do under theſe Circumſtances? Shall he queſtion every Thing? Shall he doubt whether he is awake, whether another pinches him or burns him? Shall he doubt whether he doubts? Shall he doubt whether he exiſts? It ſeems impoſſible to come to this; and therefore, I believe, there never was a finiſh'd Sceptick, a *Pyrrhonian* in Perfection. There is a ſecret Force in Nature which ſuſtains the Weakneſs of Reaſon, and hinders it from loſing itſelf in ſuch a Degree of Extravagance. Well, but ſhall a Man join himſelf to the oppoſite Faction? Shall he boaſt that he is in ſure Poſſeſſion of Truth, when, if we preſs him never ſo little, he can produce no Title,

Title, and muſt be obliged to quit his Hold?

WHAT Meaſures can ſuppreſs or compoſe this Embroilment? The *Pyrrhonians*, we ſee, are confounded by Nature, and the Dogmatiſts by Reaſon. To what a diſtracting Miſery will that Man, therefore, be reduced, who ſhall ſeek the Knowledge of his own Condition, by the bare Light and Guidance of his own Powers; it being alike impoſſible for him to avoid both theſe Sects, and to repoſe himſelf in either!

SUCH is the Pourtrait of Man, with Regard to Truth. Let us now behold him in reſpect of Felicity, which he proſecutes with ſo much Warmth thro' his whole Courſe of Action: For all deſire to be Happy: This general Rule is without Exception. Whatever Variety there may be in the Means employ'd, there is but one End univerſally purſued. The Reaſon why one Man embraceth the Hazard of War, and why another declines it, is but the ſame Deſire, attended in each with a different intermediate View. This is the ſole Motive to every Action of every Perſon; and even of ſuch as moſt unnaturally become their own Executioners.

AND yet, after the Courſe of ſo many Ages, no Perſon without Faith has ever arrived at this Point, towards which all continually

tinually tend. The whole World is buſy in complaining: Princes and Subjects, Nobles and Commons, Old and Young, the Strong and the Feeble, the Learned and the Ignorant, the Healthy and the Diſeaſed, of all Countries, all Times, all Ages, and all Conditions.

So long, ſo conſtant, ſo regular, and uniform a Proof ought fully to convince us of the Diſability we lie under towards the Acquiſition of Happineſs by our own Strength. But Example will not ſerve for our Inſtruction in this Caſe; becauſe there being no Reſemblance ſo exact as not to admit ſome nicer Difference, we are hence diſpoſed to think that our Expectation is not ſo liable to be deceived on one Occaſion as on another. Thus the preſent never ſatisfying us, the future decoys and lures us on, till from one Misfortune to another it leads us into Death, the Sum and Perfection of eternal complicated Miſery.

THIS is next to a Miracle, that there ſhould not be any one Thing in Nature which has not been ſome Time fix'd, as the laſt End and Happineſs of Man; neither Stars, nor Elements, nor Plants, nor Animals, nor Inſects, nor Diſeaſes, nor War, nor Vice, nor Sin. Man being fallen from his natural Eſtate, there is no Object ſo extravagant

travagant as not to be capable of attracting his Deſire. Ever ſince the Time that he loſt his real Good, every Thing cheats him with the Appearance of it; even his own Deſtruction, tho' the greateſt Contradiction to Reaſon and Nature at once.

SOME have ſought after Felicity in Honour and Authority, others in Curioſity and Knowledge, and a third Tribe in the Pleaſures and Enjoyments of Senſe. Theſe three leading Deſires have conſtituted as many Factions; and thoſe whom we compliment with the Name of Philoſophers, have really done nothing elſe but reſign'd themſelves up to one of the three. Such amongſt them as made the neareſt Approaches to Truth and Happineſs well conſidered, that 'twas neceſſary the univerſal Good which all deſire, and in which each Man ought to be allowed his Portion, ſhould not conſiſt in any of the private Bleſſings of this World, which can be properly enjoyed but by one alone, and which, if divided, do more grieve and afflict each Poſſeſſor, for want of the Part which he has not, than they oblige and gratify him with the Part which he has. They rightly apprehended, that the true Good ought to be ſuch as all may poſſeſs at once, without Diminution, and without Contention; and ſuch as no Man can be deprived of

againſt his Will. They apprehended this; but they were unable to attain and execute it; and inſtead of a ſolid ſubſtantial Happineſs, took up at laſt, with the empty Shadow of a fantaſtick Virtue.

OUR Inſtinct ſuggeſts to us, that we ought to ſeek our Happineſs within ourſelves. Our Paſſions hurry us abroad, even when there are no Objects to engage and incite them. The Things without are themſelves our Tempters, and charm and attract us, while we think of nothing leſs. Therefore, the wiſeſt Philoſophers might weary themſelves with crying, *Keep within your ſelves, and your Felicity is in your own Gift and Power.* The Generality never gave them Credit; and thoſe who were ſo eaſy as to believe them, became only the more unſatisfied and the more ridiculous. For is there any Thing ſo vain as the *Stoicks* Happineſs, or ſo groundleſs as the Reaſons on which they build it?

THEY conclude, that what has been done once, may be done always; and that, becauſe the Deſire of Glory has ſometimes ſpurr'd on its Votaries to great and worthy Actions, all others may uſe it with the ſame Succeſs. But theſe are the Motions of Fever and Phrenzy, which ſound Health and Judgment can never imitate.

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THE Civil War between Reaſon and Paſſion has occaſion'd two oppoſite Projects, for the reſtoring of Peace to Mankind: The one, of thoſe who were for renouncing their Paſſions, and becoming GODS; the other, of thoſe who were for renouncing their Reaſon, and becoming Beaſts. But neither the one nor the other could take Effect. Reaſon ever continues to accuſe the Baſeneſs and Injuſtice of the Paſſions, and to diſturb the Repoſe of thoſe who abandon themſelves to their Dominion: And, on the contrary, the Paſſions remain lively and vigorous in the Hearts of thoſe, who talk the moſt of their Extirpation.

THIS is the juſt Account of human Nature, and human Strength, in Reſpect of Truth and Happineſs. We have an Idea of Truth, not to be effaced by all the Wiles of the Sceptick; we have an Incapacity of Argument, not to be rectified by all the Power of the Dogmatiſt. We wiſh for Truth, and find nothing in ourſelves, but Uncertainty. We ſeek after Happineſs, and are preſented with nothing but Miſery. Our double Aim is, in Effect, a double Torture; while we are alike unable to compaſs either, and to relinquiſh either. Theſe Deſires ſeem to have been left in us, partly as a Puniſhment of our Fall, and partly

as an Indication and Remembrance whence we are fallen.

* IF Man was not made for GOD, why is GOD alone ſufficient for human Happineſs? If Man was made for GOD, why is the human Will, in all Things, repugnant to the Divine?

* MAN is at a Loſs where to fix himſelf, and how to recover his Rank in the World. He is unqueſtionably out of his Way; he feels within himſelf the ſmall Remains of his once happy State, which he is now unable to retrieve. And yet this is what he daily courts and follows after, always with Solicitude, and never with Succeſs; encompaſſed with Darkneſs, which he can neither eſcape, nor penetrate.

HENCE aroſe the grand Contention amongſt the Philoſophers: Some of whom endeavour'd to raiſe and exalt Man, by diſplaying his Greatneſs; others to depreſs and abaſe him, by repreſenting his Miſery. And what ſeems more ſtrange, is, that each Party borrow'd from the other, the Ground of their own Opinion. For the Miſery of Man may be inferr'd from his Greatneſs, as his Greatneſs is deducible from his Miſery. Thus the one Sect, with more Evidence, demonſtrated his Miſery in that they derived it from his Greatneſs; and the other more ſtrongly concluded his Greatneſs, be-

cauſe they founded it on his Miſery. Whatever was offer'd to juſtify his Greatneſs, in Behalf of one Tribe, ſerv'd only to evince his Miſery, in Behalf of the other; it being more miſerable to have fallen from the greater Height. And the ſame Proportion holds *vice verſa.* So that in this endleſs Circle of Diſpute, each help'd to advance his Adverſary's Cauſe; for 'tis certain, that the more Degrees of Light Men enjoy, the more Degrees they are able to diſcern of Miſery and of Greatneſs. In a word, Man knows himſelf to be miſerable: He is therefore exceedingly miſerable, becauſe he knows that he is ſo: But he likewiſe appears to be eminently great, from this very Act of knowing himſelf to be miſerable.

WHAT a Chimæra then is Man! What a ſurprizing Novelty! What a confuſed Chaos! What a Subject of Contradiction! A profeſs'd Judge of all Things, and yet a feeble Worm of the Earth; the great Depoſitary and Guardian of Truth, and yet a meer Huddle of Uncertainty; the Glory and the Scandal of the Univerſe: If he is too aſpiring and lofty, we can lower and humble him; if too mean and little, we can raiſe and ſwell him. To conclude: We can bait him with Repugnancies and Contradictions, 'till at length, he apprehends

hends himſelf to be a Monſter, even beyond Apprehenſion.

XXII.

The General Knowledge of Man.

THE firſt Thing which offers itſelf to Man, when reflecting on himſelf, is his Body; or ſuch a certain Portion of Matter allotted and appropriated to him. And yet to underſtand what this Portion is, he muſt be obliged to compare it with all Things that are above or below him, e're he can determine and adjuſt its Bounds. Let him not therefore content himſelf with the Sight of thoſe Objects, which immediately ſurround him. Let him contemplate all Nature, in its Height of Perfection, and Fulneſs of Majeſty. Let him conſider the great Body of the Sun, ſet up as an eternal Lamp to enlighten the Univerſe. Let him ſuppoſe the Earth to be only a Point, in Reſpect of the vaſt Circuit which this Luminary deſcribes. And, for his greater Aſtoniſhment, let him obſerve, that even this vaſt

Circuit is but a Point itſelf, compared with the Firmament and the Orb of the fix'd Stars. If his Sight be limited here, let his Imagination, at leaſt, paſs beyond. He may ſooner exhauſt the Power of conceiving, than Nature can want a new Store to furniſh out his Conceptions. The whole Extent of viſible Things, is but one Line or Stroke in the ample Boſom of Nature. No Idea can reach the immeaſurable Compaſs of her Space. We may grow as big as we pleaſe with Notion; but we ſhall bring forth meer Atoms, inſtead of real and ſolid Diſcoveries. This is an infinite Sphere, the Centre of which is every where, and the Circumference no where. In a word, 'tis the greateſt amongſt all the ſenſible Marks and Characters of the Almighty Power of GOD. And let our Imagination loſe it ſelf in this Reflection.

IF a Man can recover himſelf from ſuch a Proſpect, let him conſider what he himſelf is, if compared with the whole Expanſion of Being. Let him conclude, that he is accidentally ſtray'd into this blind Corner of Nature; and from what he finds of his preſent Dungeon, let him learn to ſet the proper Value on the Earth, on Kingdoms, on Cities, and on himſelf.

WHAT is Man with regard to this Infinity about him? Who can fix his Diſtance,

to

or comprehend his Proportion? But to ſhew him another Prodigy no leſs aſtoniſhing, let him turn his Thoughts on the ſmalleſt of thoſe Things which fall within his Knowledge. Let a Mite, for inſtance, in the contemptible Minuteneſs of its Body, preſent him with Parts incomparably more minute; with jointed Legs, with Veins in thoſe Legs, Blood in thoſe Veins, Humours in that Blood, Drops in thoſe Humours, Vapours in thoſe Drops. Let him ſtill apply all his Force, and ſtrain his utmoſt Conception, to divide the leaſt of thoſe Particulars which we have mentioned; and when he has gone as far as his Mind can reach, let the concluding Atom be the Subject of our Diſcourſe. He will probably ſuppoſe, that this is the remoteſt Extreme, the laſt Diminutive in Nature: But even in this, where he finds himſelf obliged to ſtop, I ſhall undertake ſtill to open before him a new Abyſs of Wonders. Let him conceive me delineating to him on the Surface of this imperceptible Atom, not only the viſible World, but whatſoever he is able to comprehend of the Immenſity of all Things. Let him here behold an Infinity of Worlds, each with its Firmament, its Planets, its Earth, under the ſame Proportions, as in the natural Syſtem. Let him ſtill imagine every ſuch Earth to be ſtored

with all living Things, and even with his Mites; and let him conſider that 'tis poſſible each of theſe Mites may again preſent him with ſuch a painted World as he admired in the firſt, and that the Shew may ſtill be repeated, without End, and without Reſt.

LET him again loſe himſelf in theſe Wonders, no leſs ſurprizing for their Minuteneſs, than the former for their Vaſtneſs and Extent. And who will not be confounded to reflect, that our Body, which before was judg'd imperceptible, in reſpect of the World, which World is itſelf imperceptible in the Boſom of univerſal Being, ſhould now become a Coloſſus, a World, or rather an Univerſality of Being, in reſpect of that exquiſite Diminution, at which at our laſt Refinement of Thought may by this Artifice arrive.

HE that ſhall take this Survey of his own Nature, will, no doubt, be under the greateſt Conſternation to find himſelf hanging, as it were, in his material Scale, between the two vaſt Abyſſes of Infinite and Nothing; from which he is equally removed. He will tremble at the Sight of ſo many Prodigies; and turning his Curioſity into Admiration, will, I believe, be more inclined ſilently to contemplate them, than preſumptuouſly to ſearch their Depths.

FOR

FOR what is Man amongſt the Natures which encompaſs him? In one View he appears as Unity to Infinity, in another as all to Nothing; and muſt therefore be the Medium between theſe Extremes; alike diſtant from that Nothing whence he was taken, and from that Infinity in which he is ſwallow'd up.

HIS Underſtanding holds the ſame Rank in the Order of Beings, as his Body in the material Syſtem; and all the Knowledge he can reach is only to diſcern ſomewhat of the Middle of Things, under an eternal Deſpair of comprehending either their Beginning or their End. All Things ariſe from nothing, and proceed to Infinity. Who can keep Pace with theſe Steps? Who can follow ſuch an amazing Progreſs? None but the Author of theſe Wonders is able to explain or underſtand them.

THIS middle State and Condition is common to all our Faculties. Our Senſes can bear no Extremes: Too much Noiſe, or too much Light, are equally fatal, and make us either deaf or blind; too great Diſtance, or too great Nearneſs, do alike hinder a Proſpect; too much Prolixity, or too much Brevity, darken and perplex a Diſcourſe; too intenſe a Pleaſure becomes incommodious; too uniform a Symphony has no Power to affect and move; our Body is utterly in-

diſpos'd for the laſt Degrees of Heat and Cold: Qualities in Exceſs are Enemies to our Nature; we don't properly *feel*, but *ſuffer* them: The Weakneſs of Childhood and Old Age alike incapacitate the Mind; too much or too little Food diſturbs it in its Actions; too much or too little Study renders it extravagant and unruly. Things in Extreme are of no Uſe or Account, with reſpect to our Nature; and our Nature is of as little with reſpect to theirs; either we ſhun and avoid *them*, or they miſs and eſcape *us*.

THIS is our real Eſtate; and 'tis this which fixeth and confines all our Attainments within certain Limits, which we can never paſs, being equally unable either to know all Things, or to remain ignorant of all Things. We are placed here in a vaſt and uncertain Medium, ever floating between Ignorance and Knowledge; and if we endeavour to ſtep beyond our Bounds, the Object which we would ſeize, doth, with a violent Shock, wreſt itſelf (as 'twere) from our Hold, and vaniſheth by an eternal Flight, which no Force may controul or ſtay.

THIS is the true Condition of Nature, and yet the moſt oppoſite to our Inclination. We are inflamed with a Deſire of piercing thro' all Things, and of building a Tower, the Top of which ſhall reach

even

even to Infinity. But our feeble Edifice cracks and falls; the Earth opens, without Bottom, under us, and buries our Devices in its Gulph.

XXIII.

The Greatneſs of Man.

I Can eaſily conceive a Man without Hands, and without Feet; and I could conceive him too without an Head, if I did not learn from Experience, that 'tis by the Help of this he thinks. It is Thought, therefore, which conſtitutes the Eſſence of Man, and without which he is altogether unconceivable.

* WHAT is that which has a Senſe of Pleaſure in our Frame? is it our Hand? is it our Arm? is it the Fleſh? is it the Blood? Do we not find it abſolutely neceſſary to have Recourſe to ſomewhat of an immaterial Nature for this Service?

* MAN has ſuch a Stock of real Greatneſs, that he is great even in knowing himſelf to be miſerable. A Tree is no more ſenſible of Miſery than of Felicity. 'Tis true, the knowing himſelf to be miſerable is an Addition to Man's Miſery; but then

'tis

'tis no leſs a Demonſtration of his Greatneſs. Thus his Greatneſs is ſhewn by his Miſeries, as by its Ruins. They are the Miſeries of a mighty Stateſman in Diſgrace, of a Prince diſpoſſeſs'd and dethroned.

* WHAT Man ever thought himſelf unhappy in not being a King, except a depoſed King? Did *Paulus Æmylius* apprehend any Unhappineſs in not being Conſul? The whole World eſteem'd him happy in having gone thro' that Office, which in its Deſign and Inſtitution was but temporary. But *Perſeus* was look'd on as ſo extremely miſerable in not being a King, (becauſe, according to the Nature of Royalty, he ſhould have been ever ſo,) that it was thought ſtrange he ſhould ſupport himſelf even in Life. Who is there that complains of his Misfortune in having but one Mouth? Who is there that would not reckon himſelf moſt unfortunate in having but one Eye? No Man can bring himſelf to lament that he has not three Eyes; and yet every Man is almoſt inconſolably afflicted with the Loſs of one.

* WE have ſo great an Idea of the human Soul in any Perſon, that we can't bear the Thought of wanting its Regard and Eſteem; and 'tis this united Eſteem which compoſeth all the Happineſs of Man.

IF the falſe Glory which Men purſue is on the one Side a Proof of their Miſery, it is on the other Side an Atteſtation of their Excellence: For whatever Degree of Riches, Health, and other Benefits Men enjoy, they are ſtill diſſatisfied, unleſs they find themſelves in the good Opinion of their own Kind. Human Reaſon challengeth ſo much Eſteem and Reverence from us, that under the moſt advantageous Circumſtances of Life we think ourſelves unhappy, if we are not placed to an equal Advantage in Mens Judgments. This we look on as the faireſt Poſt that can be attain'd; Nothing is able to divert us from ſo paſſionate a Deſire; and 'tis the moſt indelible Character in the Heart of Man: Inſomuch that thoſe who think ſo moſt contemptuouſly of Mankind, as to make the very Beaſts their Equals, do yet contradict their own Hypotheſis by the Motions which they feel in their own Souls. Nature, which is ſtronger than all their Reaſon, convinceth them more powerfully of Man's Greatneſs, than Reaſon can perſwade them of his Meanneſs.

* MAN is a Reed, and the weakeſt Reed in Nature; but then he is a thinking Reed. There's no Occaſion that the whole Univerſe ſhould arm itſelf for his Defeat; a Vapour, a Drop of Water is ſufficient to diſpatch him. And yet ſhould the World

oppreſs

oppreſs and cruſh him with Ruin, he would ſtill be more noble than that by which he fell, becauſe he would be ſenſible of his Fate, while the Univerſe would be inſenſible of its Victory.

THUS our whole Worth and Perfection conſiſts in Thought: 'Tis hence we are to raiſe ourſelves, and not from the empty Ideas of Space and Duration. Let us ſtudy the Art of *thinking well:* This is the Rule of Life, and the Fountain of Morals.

* IT is dangerous to inform Man, how near he ſtands to the Beaſts, without ſhewing him at the ſame Time, how infinitely he ſhines above them. Again, it is dangerous to let him ſee his Excellence, without making him acquainted with his Infirmity. And the greateſt Danger of all is, to leave him in utter Ignorance of one, and of the other. But to have a juſt Repreſentation of both, is his greateſt Intereſt and Happineſs.

* LET Man be allowed to know his own Value. Let him love himſelf, becauſe he has a Nature capable of Good; but let him not be in Love with the Weakneſſes and Diſeaſes of that Nature. Let him hate and deſpiſe himſelf, becauſe this Capacity within him is altogether empty and void; but let him not hence entertain a Diſlike

of

of ſo natural, ſo noble a Capacity. Let him hate his Being, and let him love it too; becauſe he is framed for the Poſſeſſion of Truth, (and conſequently of Happineſs,) and yet can find no Truth that is permanent or ſatisfactory. I would therefore move him to entertain a Deſire, at leaſt, of finding it, and to yield himſelf diſengaged and ready to follow, where he ſhall find it. And becauſe I am not inſenſible how much the Light of Human Knowledge is obſcured by human Paſſion, I would preſcribe to him, above all Things, the Deteſtation of his own Concupiſcence, which is ſo fatal a Biaſs on his Judgment; ſo that it may neither blind him while he is making his Choice, nor divert or obſtruct him from purſuing what he has choſen.

XXIV.

The Vanity of Man.

WE are not ſatisfied with that Life, which we poſſeſs in ourſelves, and in our own proper Being; we are fond of leading an imaginary Life in the Idea of others. And 'tis hence that we

we are ſo eager and forward to ſhew ourſelves to the World. We labour indefatigably to retain, improve, and adorn this fictitious Being, while we ſtupidly neglect the true. And if we happen to be Maſters of any noble Endowment, of Tranquility, Generoſity, or Fidelity of Mind, we preſs with all our Vigour to make them known, that we may transfer and ingraft theſe Excellencies on that fantaſtick Exiſtence. Nay, we had rather part with them, than not apply them to ſo vain a Uſe; and would gladly commence Cowards to purchaſe the Reputation of Valour. A great Indication, this of the Meanneſs, and even Nullity of our genuine Being, not to reſt ſatisfied in it, without its Shadow, and very often to renounce the former for the latter; as he who would not die to preſerve his Honour, ſhall become deſpicably infamous by the Refuſal.

* THERE is ſo much Sweetneſs, and ſo many Charms in Glory, that join it to what we will, even to Death it ſelf, it fails not to appear beautiful and lovely.

* OUR Pride is alone, a Counterpoiſe to all our Miſeries; becauſe it either conceals them, or glories in their Diſcovery.

* PRIDE has ſo natural a Poſſeſſion of us, in the Midſt of our Miſery and Error,

that

that we can loſe even our Lives with Joy, upon the Terms of being celebrated for the Act.

* VANITY has taken ſo firm Hold in the Heart of Man, that a Porter, an Hodman, a Turnſpit, can talk greatly of himſelf, and is for having his Admirers. Philoſophers do but refine upon the ſame Ambition. Thoſe who write of the Contempt of Glory, do yet deſire the Glory of writing well; and thoſe who read their Compoſitions, would not loſe the Glory of having read them. Perhaps I my ſelf, who am now making theſe Reflections, am now ſenſible of this Glory; and perhaps my Reader is not Proof againſt the Charm.

* IN ſpite of all the numerous Miſeries with which we are encompaſs'd, which ſeize us, and hold us by the Throat, we have ſtill a ſecret and inſuperable Inſtinct which bears us up.

* WE are ſo preſumptuous, as that we deſire to be known to all the World; and even to thoſe who are not to come into the World, 'till we have left it. And, at the ſame Time, we are ſo little and vain, as that the Eſteem of five or ſix Perſons about us, is enough to content and amuſe us.

THE

* THE moſt important Thing in Life is the Choice of a Profeſſion; and yet this is a Thing purely in the Diſpoſal of Chance. 'Tis meer Cuſtom which makes Upholſters, Maſons, Soldiers, *&c.* He's an excellent Upholſter, ſays one: And, Oh! what Fools are the Red Coats! Another cries, there's nothing brave and great, but the Wars; and all are Changelings that don't follow the Camp. On the bare Strength of hearing ſome Arts commended, and others condemn'd, in our Infancy, we proceed to chuſe for our ſelves; for we naturally love what is laudable, and hate what is contemptible. Theſe Words never fail to operate upon our Minds; and all the Fault is in the Application. Some Nations conſiſts wholly of Mechanicks; in others Soldiery is the univerſal Profeſſion. Nature can never be thus uniform. 'Tis Cuſtom, therefore, which produceth this Effect, and which gains the Aſcendant over Nature. Yet ſometimes again Nature will prevail, and will keep Men under the Power of Inſtinct, in ſpite of all the Oppoſition of Cuſtom, whether good or bad.

* CURIOSITY is little better than meer Vanity. For the moſt Part, we deſire to know Things purely that we may talk of them. Few would undertake ſo dangerous Voyages and Travels, for the bare

Pleaſure of entertaining their Sight, if they were bound to Secrecy at their Return, or, for ever, cloiſtered from Converſation.

* WE never think of raiſing a Name and Repute in Places thro' which we only paſs; but where we fix our Reſidence for any Time, there we eagerly admit, and induſtriouſly purſue this Thought. What Time is requiſite for the Purpoſe? ſuch as bears a Proportion to our ſhort and miſerable Life.

* A little Matter comforts us; becauſe a leſs is able to grieve and afflict us.

* WE can never keep cloſe to the Preſent. We anticipate the Time to come, as too ſlow, in order to the making it mend its Pace: Or we call back the Time that is paſt, as too ſwift, in order to the ſtopping its Flight. Such is our Folly, that we ramble thro' thoſe Times in which we have no Concern, and utterly forget that on which our whole Fortune and Intereſt depends: Such our Vanity, that we dream of thoſe which are not, and let that which alone ſubſiſts, paſs by us without Notice or Reflection. The Reaſon of all which is this; becauſe the preſent generally gives us ſome Uneaſineſs, we are willing to hide it from our Sight, as being grievous to us: But if it happen to be agreeable, we are in no leſs Pain to ſee it ſlide ſo

faſt away. Hence we tack the future to it to ſtrengthen and ſupport it, and pretend to diſpoſe of Things, not in our Power, for a Time at which we have no Aſſurance ever to arrive.

LET a Man examine his own Thoughts, and he will always find them imploy'd about the Time *paſt*, or *to come.* We ſcarce beſtow a Glance upon the preſent; or, if we do, 'tis only that we may borrow Light from hence to manage and direct the Future. The Preſent is never the Mark of our Deſigns. We uſe both Paſt and Preſent as our Means and Inſtruments, but the Future only as our Object and Aim. Thus we never live, but we ever hope to live; and under this continual Diſpoſition and Preparation to Happineſs, 'tis certain we can never be actually happy, if our Hopes are terminated with the Scene of this Life.

* OUR Fancy ſo much enlargeth and ſwells this Temporal Duration, by reflecting perpetually on it, and ſo far extenuates and contracts our eternal State, by ſeldom taking it into Thought that we make a Nothing of Eternity, and an Eternity of Nothing. And the Springs of this whole Proceeding are ſo vigorous in us, that all our Reaſon is too weak to ſuppreſs or overrule them.

* *CROM-*

* *CROMWELL* ſeem'd to have laid a fair Train for the Ruin of all *Chriſtendom*: The Royal Family had been deſtroy'd, and his own confirmed for ever in their Uſurpation, but for the little Gravel Stone which fell down into his Ureter. *Rome* itſelf began to tremble under him. But this petty Grain, which elſewhere had been contemptible, lighting on ſuch a Part, occaſion'd the Death of the Uſurper, the Fall of his Family, and the Reſtoration of the King.

SA

XXV.

The Weakneſs of Man.

THERE is nothing which more aſtoniſhes me, than that the whole World ſhould not be aſtoniſh'd at their own Infirmity. Men proceed ſeriouſly to Action, and every one follows the Way of Life he has embraced, not as if it were really good in being the Mode, but as if each Man were exactly acquainted with the Meaſures of Reaſon and Juſtice.

WE are diſappointed every Moment; and by a very pleaſant Humility we imagine that the Fault is in ourſelves, and not in the Art which we all profeſs to underſtand. 'Tis fit there ſhould be many Perſons of this Com-

plection in the World; to demonſtrate that Man is capable of the moſt extravagant Opinions, becauſe he is capable of believing that the Weakneſs he feels is not general and inevitable, but that he is naturally endued with true Judgment and infallible Wiſdom.

* The Weakneſs of human Reaſon appears more evidently in thoſe who are inſenſible of it, than in ſuch as know and confeſs it.

* WHILE we are too young, our Judgment is in Immaturity; and when we are too old, 'tis in Decay. If we think too little of a Thing, or too much, our Head turns giddy, and we are at a loſs to find out our Way to Truth.

HE that Views his own Work, juſt as it comes out of his Hands, is too much prepoſſeſſed in its favour: And he that lets it lie too long unſurvey'd, forgets the Niceneſs of its Contexture, and the Model by which 'twas wrought.

THERE is but one preciſe Point which is the true Place of ſhewing a Picture; all others are either too near, or too diſtant, too high, or too low. Perſpective aſſigns this Point in the Art of Painting; but who has Skill enough to fix it in Truth and Morals?

* THAT Miſtreſs of Miſtake, which we call Fancy or Opinion, is therefore the greater

ter Cheat, becauſe ſhe does not cheat conſtantly, and by Rule. Always to lye, would be always to tell the Truth: Whereas being deceitful only for the moſt part, ſhe gives us no Marks of her Character, but ſtamps Truth and Falſhood with the very ſame Impreſſion.

THIS proud Princeſs and Potentate, the ſworn Enemy of Reaſon, ſo ambitious to rule and domineer, has, that ſhe may ſhew her abſolute Power over the World, eſtabliſh'd in Man a ſecond Nature. She has her Rich and her Poor, her Happy and her Miſerable, her Sick and her Sound, her Fools and her Wiſe; and nothing grieves us ſo much as to ſee that ſhe fills her Votaries with a Satisfaction more large and entire than Reaſon pretends to give. The imaginary wiſe Men feel another ſort of Complacency within themſelves, than the Maſters of true Wiſdom can regularly find. Thoſe look on the World with an Air of Authority, and diſcourſe with Aſſurance and Confidence, while theſe never expreſs themſelves without Diffidence and Concern. And that Gaiety of Countenance often gives the former ſuch an Advantage in the Minds of their Hearers, that when they meet with Judges of their own Standard, they ſeldom fail to pleaſe. Opinion cannot indeed make a Fool wiſe; but it makes

him contented, and ſo triumphs over Reaſon, which ſeems only to render its Friends and Followers more ſenſibly miſerable. This puniſheth us with Infamy, while that rewards us with Glory.

WHAT diſpenſes Reputation, what procures Veneration and Regard to Perſons and Things, but Opinion? How inſufficient are all the Treaſures of the World to delight or ſatisfy, without its Approbation and Conſent?

OPINION is the univerſal Diſpoſer of Things: This makes Beauty, and Juſtice, and Happineſs; and theſe make all that is excellent upon Earth. I would gladly ſee an *Italian* Piece, of which I know only the Title, but ſuch a Title as is worth many whole Books; it is *Della opinione Regina del Mundo: Of Opinion, the Queen of the World.* If it has nothing in it worſe than this Title, I ſubſcribe to it heartily, unſeen.

* THERE is ſcarce any Thing, juſt or unjuſt, which does not change its Nature, upon changing its Climate. Three Degrees of Elevation in the Pole may ruin the whole Profeſſion of Law. A Meridian on the Globe, or a few Years Prepoſſeſſion, decides the moſt important Truths. Maxims and firſt Principles are ſubject to Revolutions; and we are to go

to

to Chronology for the *Epochas* of Right and Wrong. A very humourſome Juſtice this, which is bounded by a River or a Mountain: Orthodoxy on one Side of the *Pyrenees*, may be Hereſy on the other.

* THE Art of overturning Kingdoms is to reverſe eſtabliſh'd Cuſtoms, by ſearching them to the quick, and then cenſuring them as originally defective in Authority and Juſtice. We ought, (ſay theſe Criticks in Policy,) to go back to the primitive and fundamental Laws, which unrighteous Cuſtom has deſtroy'd. When Men are at this Play, the State is ſure to loſe all. Nothing can keep its Weight in ſo falſe a Balance: Yet the Multitude lend a willing Ear to ſuch Diſcourſes; they are glad to ſhake off the Yoke; and the great ones raiſe themſelves not only upon their Ruin, but upon the Ruin of thoſe curious Refiners, who were the firſt Engines of the Miſchief. But then there's another Fault quite oppoſite to this, when we think every Thing to be done with Juſtice, that is not done without Example.

* SET the greateſt Philoſopher in the World upon a Plank, but ſomewhat broader than the Space which he uſually takes up in walking, and let there be a Precipice underneath, his Reaſon may demonſtrate him to be ſafe, but his Fancy will deny the

Argument. This is a Venture, the very Thought of which few can bear without ſweating, or turning pale. I need not run thro' all Inſtances of the ſame kind: Every one knows the Sight of a Cat or Rat, or the craſhing of a Coal, will throw ſome Perſons into a Fit, and put their Reaſon quite beſide its Guard!

* Look upon that venerable Magiſtrate, whoſe Age and Ability command the Reverence of the whole Nation. Would you not ſuppoſe that he governs himſelf by the pureſt and ſublimeſt Wiſdom, and judgeth of Things according to their real Nature, without being moved by thoſe trifling Accidents and Circumſtances, which diſorder only weak and little People? But behold him entring the Court; ſee him placed on the Bench, and prepared with exemplary Gravity for a formal Hearing: Let one of the Council have an untunable Voice, or a ſingular Aſpect, let him have been ill treated by his Barber, or diſobliged by the Roads and Weather, and I'll wager againſt the Countenance of your Chief Juſtice.

* THE Soul of the greateſt Man living is not ſo free and independent, but that 'tis ſubject to Diſturbance, at the leaſt Noiſe about him. You need not let off a Cannon to break his Train of Thought: The Creaking of a Weather-cock, or of a Pul-

ly,

ly, will do it effectually. Don't be ſurprized that you hear him argue a little incoherently at preſent. He has a Fly buzzing at his Ears, and that's enough to make him a Stranger to good Counſel. Would you have him rightly apprized of the Truth, you muſt take off this untoward Animal, which holds his Reaſon at Bay, and diſcompoſeth that ſovereign Underſtanding which gives Laws to Towns and Kingdoms.

* DISEASES are another Principle of Error. They impair our Judgment and our Senſes. And if thoſe which are moſt violent produce a very viſible Change, thoſe which have leſs Strength do yet leave a proportionable Impreſſion.

AGAIN, Intereſt muſt be acknowleg'd to have a ſingular Art in agreeably putting out our Eyes. Affection or Diſlike quite invert the Rules of Juſtice. A Counſellor retain'd with a large Fee, grows clear-ſighted to Admiration, and finds the Cauſe immediately improve upon his Hands. Yet I have known the Men, who thro' a contrary Fantaſticalneſs of Spirit, have, to avoid theſe partial and ſelfiſh Regards, been drawn into the higheſt Injuſtice by a moſt unreaſonable Counterpoiſe. The ſure Way to ruin the faireſt Concern depending before them, was to get recommended by ſome of their neareſt Relations.

* TRUTH

* TRUTH and Juſtice are Things ſo nice and ſubtile, that our Inſtruments are not fine enough to touch or take hold of them with any Exactneſs. In both Caſes they either miſs the *Point* utterly, or fall foul upon it, and then ſettle at a Venture, ſeldom ſo near to the Right as to the Wrong.

* A Veneration for Antiquity does not only abuſe and enſlave our Mind: The Charms of Novelty have the ſame Aſcendent over us. And hence ariſe all the Diſputes amongſt Men, who charge each other, either with ſticking to the falſe Impreſſions of their Childhood, or with running, at all Adventures, into every new Hypotheſis and Fancy.

WHO is the Man that keeps the juſt Medium between theſe Extremes? Let him appear, and make good his Pretenſions. There is no Principle, how natural ſoever it may ſeem, and tho' even ſuck'd in with our firſt Milk, but may be made to paſs for a falſe Impreſſion, either of Education or of Senſe: Becauſe (ſays one) you have been wont ever ſince your Infancy to ſuppoſe a Veſſel empty when you ſaw nothing in't, hence you come to believe the Poſſibility of a *Vacuum*. Why, this is only a ſtrong Deluſion of your Senſes, ſtrengthen'd by Cuſtom, which Science and Demonſtration ought to correct. By your

your Leave, (ſays the other,) you have been poſitively told in the Schools, that a *Vacuum* was impoſſible; and thus your Senſes were corrupted, which eaſily and naturally allow'd it before this ill Impreſſion: This, therefore, you ought to deface, by returning to your primitive Nature. And now we have heard both Sides, where ſhall we fix the Cheat, in our Senſes, or in our Education?

* THE whole Employment of Mens Lives is to improve their Fortunes; and yet the Title by which they hold all, if traced to its Origin, is no more than the pure Fancy of the Legiſlators: But their Poſſeſſion is ſtill more precarious than their Right, and at the Mercy of a thouſand Accidents: Nor are the Treaſures of the Mind better enſured; while a Fall, or a Fit of Sickneſs may bankrupt the ableſt Underſtanding.

* So that, abſtracting from a State of Grace, Man is nothing but the continual Subject of indelible and inſuperable Errors. He can purchaſe no certain Information; every Thing in the World abuſeth his Curioſity. His two *Criterions* of Truth, Reaſon, and Senſe, (beſides that they are not always faithful to themſelves,) are wont reciprocally to mock and delude each other. Our Senſes beguile our Reaſon with

with falſe Appearances; and our Reaſon has likewiſe its falſe Conſequences, wherewith ſo return and revenge the Cheat. The Paſſions diſcompoſe the Senſes, and ſtrike upon them the wrong Way. They lye, and forge, and miſrepreſent, with a ſort of vicious Emulation.

* WHAT are all our natural Principles, but Principles of Cuſtom, derived from Parents to Children, as Fear and Flight to the Beaſts of Game?

A different Cuſtom will produce a different natural Principle. This Experience teſtifies: And if there are ſome Dictates of Nature impregnable againſt Cuſtom, there are likewiſe ſome Impreſſions of Cuſtom, which Nature cannot over-rule. This depends wholly on the Temper and Conſtitution of particular Men.

PARENTS diſcover a Jealouſy leſt the natural Duty and Affection of their Children ſhould be defaced: What a ſort of Nature is this, which we ſuppoſe capable of Defacement? We muſt at leaſt allow Cuſtom to be another Nature, which can thus deſtroy the former: And where's the Impropriety in ſtyling Cuſtom natural? or why may not Nature itſelf be conceiv'd as a primary Cuſtom, no leſs than Cuſtom as a ſecondary Nature?

XXVI.

XXVI.

The Miſery of Man.

THERE is nothing more capable of letting us into the Knowledge of human Miſery, than an Enquiry after the real Cauſe of that perpetual Hurry and Confuſion, in which we paſs our Lives.

THE Soul is ſent into the Body, to be the Sojourner of a few Days. She knows that this is but a Stop, till ſhe may embark for Eternity; and that a ſmall Space is allow'd her to prepare for the Voyage. The main Part of this Space is raviſh'd from her by the Neceſſities of Nature; and but a ſlender Pittance left to her own Diſpoſal: And yet this Moment which remains, does ſo ſtrangely oppreſs and perplex her, that ſhe only ſtudies how to loſe it: She feels an intolerable Burthen, in being obliged to live with herſelf, and think of herſelf; and therefore, her principal Care is to forget herſelf, and to let this ſhort and precious Moment paſs away without Reflection, by amuſing herſelf with

with Things which prevent her Notice of its Speed.

THIS is the Ground of all the tumultuary Buſineſs, of all the trifling Diverſions amongſt Men; in which our general Aim is to make the Time paſs off our Hands without feeling it, or rather without feeling ourſelves; and, by getting rid of this ſmall Portion of Life, to avoid that inward Diſguſt and Bitterneſs, which we ſhould not fail to meet with, if we found Leiſure to deſcend into our own Breaſts. For 'tis undeniably certain, that the Soul of Man is here incapable of Reſt and Satisfaction. And this obliges her to expand her ſelf every Way, and to ſeek how ſhe may loſe the Thoughts of her own proper Being in a ſettled Application to the Things about her. Her very Happineſs conſiſts in this Forgetfulneſs: And to make her exquiſitely miſerable, nothing more is required but the engaging her to look into her ſelf, and to dwell at Home.

WE charge Perſons from their very Infancy with the Care of their own Fortunes and Honours, and no leſs of the Eſtates and Dignities belonging to their Kindred and Friends. We burthen them with the Study of Languages, of Exerciſes, and of Arts. We enter them in Buſineſs, and perſuade them, that they can never be truly bleſs'd,

unleſs by their Induſtry and Caution they in ſome Meaſure ſecure the Intereſt and Glory of themſelves, their Families, and their Dependents; and that unavoidable Unhappineſs is entail'd upon the Failure of any one Particular in this kind. Thus we teach them to wear out their Strength, and to rob themſelves of their Reſt. A ſtrange Method (you'll ſay) of making them happy! What could be done with more Effect towards the inſuring them in Miſery? Would you know what? Why, only to releaſe them from theſe Cares, and to take off theſe Burthens. For then their Eyes and their Thoughts muſt be turn'd inward, and that's the only Hardſhip which they eſteem inſupportable. Hence, if they gain any Relaxation from their Labours, we find them eager to throw it away upon ſome Sport or Diverſion, which takes up their whole Activity, and pleaſantly robs them of themſelves.

'Tis for this Reaſon, that when I have ſet my ſelf to conſider the various Agitations of human Life, the Toil and Danger, to which we expoſe ourſelves in the Court, in the Camp, in the Purſuits of Ambition, which give Birth to ſo much Paſſion and Contention, to ſo many deſperate and fatal Adventures, I have often ſaid that the univerſal Cauſe of Men's Misfortunes, was their

their not being able to live quietly in a Chamber. A Perſon who has enough for the Uſes of this World, did he know the Art of dwelling with himſelf, would never quit that Repoſe and Security for a Voyage or a Siege; nor would take ſo much Pains to hazard his Life, had he no other Aim than barely to live.

BUT, upon ſtricter Examination I found, that this Averſion to Home, this roving and reſtleſs Diſpoſition, proceeded from a Cauſe, no leſs powerful than univerſal; from the native Unhappineſs of our frail and mortal State, which is incapable of all Comfort, if we have nothing to divert our Thoughts, and to call us out of ourſelves.

I ſpeak of thoſe alone who ſurvey their own Nature, without the Views of Faith and Religion. 'Tis indeed one of the Miracles of Chriſtianity, that by reconciling Man to GOD, it reſtores him to his own good Opinion; that it makes him able to bear the Sight of himſelf; and in ſome Caſes, renders Solitude and Silence more agreeable, than all the Intercourſe and Action of Mankind. Nor is it by fixing Man in his own Perſon, that it produceth theſe wonderful Effects; 'tis by carrying him to GOD, and by ſupporting him under the Senſe of his Miſeries, with the Hopes of an

an assured and complete Deliverance in a better Life.

BUT for those who do not act above the Principles of meer Nature, 'tis impossible they should, without falling into an incurable Chagrine and Discontent, undergo the lingering Torment of Leisure. Man who loves nothing but his own Person, hates nothing so much as to be confined to his own Conversation. He seeks nothing but himself, and yet flies and avoids nothing more than himself; because when he is obliged to look within, he does not see himself such as he could wish; discovering only a hidden Store of inevitable Miseries, and a mighty *Void* of all real and solid Good, which 'tis beyond his Ability to replenish.

LET a Man chuse his own Condition, let him embelish it with all the Goods and all the Satisfactions, he can possess or desire; yet, if in the midst of this Glory and Pride he is without Business, and without Diversion, and has Time to contemplate on his Fortunes, his Spirits must unavoidably sink beneath the languishing Felicity. He will of necessity torment himself with the Prospect of what's to come; and he that boasted to have brought home all the Ingredients of Happiness, must

again be ſent abroad, or condemn'd to domeſtick Miſery.

Is Majeſty it ſelf ſo truly great, and ſufficient, as to ſupport thoſe whom it adorns and encircles, under the bare Thought of their own Grandeur? Is it neceſſary that this Thought ſhould be here likewiſe diverted, as in the common Herd of Men? A vulgar Perſon will be abundantly happy, if he may eaſe himſelf of his ſecret Troubles, by applying all his Care to excel in the Perfection of Dancing. But dare we ſay this of a King? Or, will he be more charm'd with ſo vain and petty Amuſements, than with the Contemplation of his Royal Dignity and Eſtate? What nobler, what more ſublime Object than himſelf, to engage and to ſatisfy his Spirit? Might it not ſeem an envious leſſening of his Content, to interrupt his princely Thought, with the Care of meaſuring his Steps by an Air of Muſick, or of exactly ordering a *Ball*, inſtead of leaving him to ſurvey the Glories of his Throne, and to rejoice in the Excellence of his Power? Let us preſume to make the Experiment: Let us ſuppoſe a Prince in Solitude, without any Entertainment of Senſe, any Engagement of Mind, any Relief of Converſation; and we ſhall find that a Prince with his Eyes upon himſelf, is a Man full of

of Miſeries, and who feels them with as quick and piercing a Reſentment as the loweſt among his Slaves. And therefore, it has been a ſtanding Maxim, to baniſh theſe intruding and importunate Reflections from Court, and to keep about the *Royal Perſon* thoſe who ſhall conſtantly purvey for the Amuſement of their Maſter, by laying a Train of Divertiſements to ſucceed after Buſineſs, and by watching his Hours of Leiſure, to pour in immediately a freſh Supply of Mirth and Sport, that no Vacancy may be left in Life, that is, the Court abounds with Men, who have a wonderful Activity in taking care that *His Majeſty* ſhall not be alone, well-knowing that Solitude is but another Name for Miſery, and that the ſupreme Pitch of worldly Greatneſs is too nice and weak, to bear the Examination of a Thought.

THE principal Thing which ſupports Men under Great Imployments, otherwiſe ſo full of Toil and Trouble, is, that by this Means they are call'd off from the Penance of Self-Reflection.

FOR pray conſider, what is it elſe to be a *Superintendent*, a *Chancellor*, a *Prime-Preſident*, but to have a Number of Perſons flocking about them from all Sides, who ſhall ſecure them, every Hour in the Day, from giving Audience to their own

Mind? If they chance to fall into Diſgrace, and to be baniſh'd to their Country Seat, tho' they want neither Fortune nor Retinue, yet they ſeldom fail to commence unhappy; becauſe they are no longer entertain'd with ſuch a Variety of new Faces, and a Succeſſion of new Buſineſs, as may make any Thing, rather than themſelves, the Subject of their Meditation.

WHENCE comes it to paſs, that Men are tranſported to ſuch a Degree with Gaming, Hunting, or other Diverſions, which ſeem to have taken an abſolute Poſſeſſion of their Souls? Not becauſe there is any real and intrinſick Good to be obtain'd by theſe Purſuits; not becauſe they imagine that true Happineſs is to be found in the Money which they win at Play, or in the Beaſt which they run down in the Chace: For ſhould you preſent them beforehand with both theſe, to ſave their Trouble, they would be unanimous in rejecting the Propoſal. 'Tis not the gentle and eaſy Part which they are fond of, ſuch as may give them Leiſureand Space for Thought; but 'tis the Heat and the Hurry, which divert them from the Mortification of thinking.

ON this Account it is, that Men are ſo much in Love with the Noiſe and Tumult of the World; that a Priſon is a Seat of

Horror, and that few Perſons can bear the Puniſhment of being confined to themſelves.

WE have ſeen the utmoſt that human Invention can do, in projecting for human Happineſs. Thoſe who content themſelves barely with demonſtrating the Vanity and Littleneſs of common Diverſions, are indeed acquainted with one Part of our Miſeries; for a conſiderable Part it is, to be thus capable of taking Pleaſure in Things ſo baſe and inſignificant. But they apprehend not the Cauſe and Principle which renders theſe Miſeries even neceſſary to us, ſo long as we remain uncured of that inward and natural Infirmity of not being able to bear the Sight of our own Condition. The Hare which Men buy in the Market, can't skreen them from this View; but the Field and the Chaſe afford an approved Relief. And therefore when we reproach them with their low and ignoble Aim, and obſerve to them how little Satisfaction there is in that which they follow with ſo much Contention and Ardour, did they anſwer upon mature Judgment, they would acknowledge the Equity of our Cenſure, and would ingenuouſly declare, that they propoſed nothing in theſe Purſuits but the bare Violence of the Motion, ſuch as might keep them Strangers to

the Secrets of their Soul; and that therefore they made choice of Objects, which, how worthleſs ſoever in Reality, yet were of an engaging and attractive Nature, and able to engroſs the Activity of all their Powers. And the Reaſon why they don't anſwer in this Manner, is the Want of this Acquaintance with their own Boſom. A Gentleman believes with all Sincerity that there's ſomewhat Great and Noble in Hunting, and will be ſure to tell you, that 'tis a Royal Sport. You may hear the like Defence and Encomium of any other Exerciſe or Employment, which Men affect or purſue. They imagine that there muſt needs be ſomewhat real and ſolid in the Objects themſelves. They are perſuaded, that could they but gain ſuch a Point, they ſhould then repoſe themſelves with Content and Pleaſure; and are under an Inſenſibility of the inſatiable Nature of this Deſire. They believe themſelves to be heartily engaged in the Attainment of Reſt, while they are indeed employ'd in nothing elſe but the Search of continual and ſucceſſive Drudgery.

MEN have a ſecret Inſtinct, prompting them to ſeek Employment or Recreation; which proceeds from no other Cauſe but the Senſe of their inward Pain, and never-ceaſing Torment. They have another ſecret

cret Inſtinct, a Relique of their primitive Nature, which aſſures them, that the Sum of their Happineſs conſiſts in Eaſe and Repoſe. And upon theſe two oppoſite Inſtincts, they form one confuſed Deſign, lurking in the Receſſes of their Soul, which engages them to proſecute the latter by the Intervention of the former, and conſtantly to perſuade themſelves, that the Satisfaction they have hitherto wanted, will infallibly attend them, if by ſurmounting certain Difficulties, which they now look in the Face, they may open a ſafe Paſſage to Peace and Tranquility.

THUS our Life runs out. We ſeek Reſt, by encountering ſuch particular Impediments, which if we are able to remove, the Conſequence is, that the Reſt which we have obtain'd, becomes it ſelf a Grievance. For we are ruminating every Moment, either on the Miſeries we feel, or on thoſe we fear. And even when we ſeem on all Sides to be placed under Shelter, the Affections, which are ſo naturally rooted in us, fail not to regret their loſt Dominion, and to diffuſe their melancholick Poiſon through the Soul.

AND therefore, when *Cineas* ſo gravely admoniſh'd *Pyrrhus*, (who propoſed to enjoy himſelf with his Friends, after he ſhould have conquer'd a good Part of the

World) that he would do much better to anticipate his own Happineſs, by taking immediate Poſſeſſion of this Eaſe and Quiet, without purſuing it through ſo much Fatigue: The Counſel he gave was indeed full of Difficulty, and ſcarce more rational than the Project of that young ambitious Prince. Both the one and the other Opinion ſuppoſed that which is falſe; that a Man can reſt ſatisfied with himſelf, and his preſent Poſſeſſions, without filling up the void Space in his Heart, with imaginary Expectations. *Pyrrhus* muſt inevitably have been unhappy, either without or with the Conqueſt of the World; and perhaps that ſoft and peaceful Life which his Miniſter adviſed him to embrace, was leſs capable of giving him Satisfaction, than the Heat and Tumult of ſo many Expeditions, and ſo many Battles, which he was then forming and fighting in his Mind.

MAN therefore muſt be confeſs'd to be ſo very unfortunate, as that without any external Cauſe of Trouble he would ever regret and bemoan the very Condition of his own Nature, and yet to be at the ſame Time ſo very fantaſtical, as that while he is full of a thouſand inward and eſſential Subjects of Grief, the leaſt outward Trifle is ſufficient to divert him. Inſomuch, that upon impartial Conſideration, his Caſe

ſeems

ſeems more to be lamented in that he is capable of receiving Pleaſure from Things ſo low and frivolous, than in that he is ſo immoderately afflicted with his own real Miſeries, and his Diverſion appears infinitely leſs reaſonable than his Diſquiet.

* WHENCE is it, think ye, that this Gentleman, who has lately buried his only Son, and who this very Morning was ſo full of Law and Lamentation, at preſent ſeems to have quite forgotten his Part? Don't be ſurpriz'd; the Buſineſs is, that our Friend's wholly taken up with looking what Way the Stag will turn, which his Dogs have been in Chaſe of ſome Hours. Such an Accident is enough to put a Man beſide his Chagrine, tho' groaning under the heavieſt Calamity of Life. As long as you can engage him in ſome Divertiſement, ſo long you make him happy; but 'tis with a falſe and imaginary Happineſs, not ariſing from the Poſſeſſion of any real and ſolid Good, but from a Levity of Spirit, by which he loſes the Memory of his ſubſtantial Woes, amidſt the Entertainments of mean and ridiculous Objects, unworthy of his Application, more unworthy of his Love. 'Tis the Joy of a Man in a Fever, or a Phrenzy, reſulting not from the regular Motion, but from the Diſtemper and Diſcompoſure of his Mind. 'Tis a meer Sport of Folly

and

and Deluſion. Nor is there any Thing more ſurprizing in human Life, than to obſerve the Inſignificancy of thoſe Things which divert and pleaſe us. 'Tis true, by thus keeping our Mind always employ'd, they ſhield it from the Conſideration of real Evils; but then they make it utterly cheat itſelf, by doating on a fantaſtick Object of Delight.

WHAT do you take to be the Aim and Motive of thoſe Youths, whom you ſee engaged at Tennis with ſuch Force of Body and Application of Mind? Why, the Pleaſure of boaſting to-morrow, that they won ſo many Sets of ſuch a notable Gameſter. This is the real Spring of ſo much Action and Toil. And 'tis but the very ſame which diſpoſes others to drudge and ſweat in their Cloſets, for the ſake of informing the learned World, that they have reſolv'd a Queſtion in *Algebra*, hitherto reputed inexplicable. Many Thouſands more expoſe themſelves to the greateſt of Dangers for the Glory of taking a Town; in my Judgment, no leſs ridiculouſly. To conclude; There are not wanting thoſe who kill themſelves purely with reading and obſerving all this Application of others; not that they may grow wiſer by it, but that they may have the Credit of apprehending its Vanity. And theſe laſt are

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the moſt exquiſitely fooliſh, becauſe they are ſo willingly and wittingly; whereas 'tis reaſonable to ſuppoſe of the reſt, that were they alike ſenſible of their Folly, they would want no Admonition to deſert it.

* A Man, that by gaming every Day for ſome little Stake, paſſeth away his Life without Uneaſineſs or Melancholy, would yet be render'd unhappy, ſhould you give him every Morning the Sum which he could poſſibly win all Day, upon Condition to forbear. It will be ſaid, perhaps, that 'tis the Amuſement of the Play which he ſeeks, and not the Gain. Yet if he plays for nothing, his Gaiety is over, and the Spleen recovers full Poſſeſſion. Bare Amuſement, therefore, is not what he propoſeth; a languiſhing Amuſement without Heat or Paſſion, would but diſpirit and fatigue him: He muſt be allow'd to raiſe and chaff himſelf, by propoſing a Happineſs in the gaining of that which he would deſpiſe, if given him not to venture, and by creating a fictitious Object, which ſhall excite and employ his Deſire, his Anger, his Hope, and his Fear.

So that theſe Diverſions of Men, which are found to conſtitute their Happineſs, are not only mean and vile, but they are falſe and deceitful: That is, we are in Love with meer airy Shapes and Phantoms, ſuch as muſt

muſt be incapable of poſſeſſing the Heart of Man, had he not loſt the Taſte and Perception of real Good, and were he not filled with Baſeneſs, and Levity, and Pride, together with an infinite Number of other Vices, ſuch as can no Way relieve us under our preſent Miſeries, but by creating others, which are ſtill more dangerous, in being more ſubſtantial. For theſe are the Things which chiefly bar us from our own Thoughts, and which teach us to give new Wings to our Time, and yet to remain inſenſible of its Flight. Without theſe, we ſhould indeed be under a continued Wearineſs and Perplexity, yet ſuch as might prompt us to ſeek out a better Method for its Cure. Whereas theſe, which we call our Diverſions, do but amuſe and beguile us; and, in Concluſion, lead us down blindfold into our Grave.

* MANKIND having no infallible Remedy againſt Ignorance, Miſery, and Death, imagine that ſome Reſpite, ſome Shelter, may at leaſt be found, by agreeing to baniſh them from their Meditation. This is the only Comfort they have been able to invent under their numerous Calamities. But a moſt miſerable Comfort it proves, becauſe it does not tend to the Removal of theſe Evils, but only to the Concealment of them for a ſhort Seaſon; and becauſe, in thus

thus concealing them, it hinders us from applying ſuch proper Means as ſhould remove them. Thus, by a ſtrange Revolution in the Nature of Man, that Grief and inward Diſquiet, which he dreads as the greateſt of ſenſible Evils, is in one Reſpect his greateſt Good, becauſe it might contribute, more than all Things beſides, to the putting him in a ſucceſsful Method of Recovery. On the other hand, his Recreation, which he ſeems to prize as his ſovereign Good, is indeed his greateſt Evil, becauſe it is of all Things the moſt effectual in making him negligent under his Diſtemper. And both the one and the other are admirable Proofs, as of Man's Miſery and Corruption, ſo of his Greatneſs and Dignity. For the Reaſon why he grows ſick and weary of every Object, and engages in ſuch a Multitude of Purſuits, is, becauſe he ſtill retains the Idea of his loſt Happineſs; which not finding within himſelf, he ſeeks it thro' the whole Circle of external Things; but always ſeeks without Succeſs, becauſe it is indeed to be found not in ourſelves, nor in the Creatures, but in GOD alone.

XXVII.

XXVII.

Thoughts upon Miracles.

WE are to judge of Doctrines by Miracles, and of Miracles by Doctrines: They are the Teſt and Standard of each other, yet without the leaſt Repugnancy or Difficulty.

* SOME Miracles are certain and infallible Evidences of Truth, others are not. We ought to have a ſettled Rule whereby to diſtinguiſh them, or they muſt prove wholly uſeleſs to us. But they are ſo far from being of no uſe, as to be of abſolute and fundamental Neceſſity.

OUR Rule therefore muſt be ſuch, as ſhall not impair the Strength afforded by true Miracles to the true Religion, which is the principal End of Miracles.

* WERE there no Miracles ever join'd to Falſhood and Error, they would be immediately convictive, without Search or Trial. But, as the Caſe is otherwiſe, had we no Rule to ſearch and try them by, they would be utterly in effectual, and we ſhould loſe the chief Ground and Motive of our Faith.

MOSES has eſtabliſh'd one Rule; when the Miracle perform'd ſhall lead Men to Idolatry [1]; and our Lord has eſtabliſh'd another [2]; *There's no Man* (ſays he) *which ſhall do a Miracle in my Name, that can lightly ſpeak Evil of me:* Whence it follows, that whoever declares openly againſt *JESUS CHRIST* cannot perform Miracles in his Name, and Miracles not perform'd in the Name of *CHRIST*, are to be rejected without Credit or Dependence. We ſee then the two only juſt Exceptions againſt Miracles; that in the Old Teſtament, when they turn us from GOD; and that in the New, when they turn us from *JESUS CHRIST.*

So that immediately upon the Sight of a Miracle, we ought either to yield and ſubmit to it, or to have ſome very extraordinary Token in bar to its Pretenſions; that is, we ought to be certain whether the Perſon who performs it, denies the only true GOD, or our Lord *JESUS CHRIST.*

* EVERY Religion is falſe, which, as to its Faith, does not preſcribe the Worſhip of one GOD, as the great Author and Fountain of all Things; and which, as to its Morals,

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[1] Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3. [2] Mark ix. 38.

Morals, does not preſcribe the Love of one GOD, as the great Object and End of all Things.

EVERY Religion, at this Day, which does not acknowledge the LORD *JESUS CHRIST* is notoriouſly falſe, and even Miracles are inſufficient for its Atteſtation.

* THE *Jews* had a Doctrine delivered by GOD, as we have a Doctrine delivered by *JESUS CHRIST*; and in like Manner, confirm'd by Miracles. They had alſo an expreſs Prohibition againſt crediting thoſe who ſhould even work Miracles in Confirmation of a contrary Doctrine, together with an Order to apply themſelves to the Chief Prieſts, to be concluded by their Judgment. So that whatſoever Reaſons we have, at preſent, to refuſe our Aſſent, to the Workers of Miracles, the ſame they may ſeem to have had, with regard to our LORD and his Apoſtles.

AND yet moſt certain it is, that they were highly culpable in this Reſpect; for our LORD himſelf declares, that his Miracles render'd them without Excuſe. *Si opera non feciſſem in eis quæ nemo alius fecit, peccatum non haberent. If I had not done amongſt them the Works which none other Man did, they had not had Sin.*[3]

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[3] John xv. 24.

THE Conſequence is, that he judg'd his Miracles to be infallible Evidences of his Doctrine, and the *Jews* to be under a neceſſary Obligation of believing him. And indeed, his Miracles eſpecially render'd the Incredulity of the *Jews* wilful and criminal: For the Teſtimonies drawn purely from Scripture, did not, before our Lord's Death, amount to a Demonſtration. For Inſtance, *Moſes* had ſaid, *a Prophet ſhall the* LORD *your* GOD *raiſe ye up, &c.* but this did by no means evince *JESUS CHRIST* to be that Prophet, and therefore left the main Queſtion undecided: Yet this, with other the like Paſſages, was ſufficient to raiſe a Preſumption that he might poſſibly be the *Meſſias*, or that Prophet; which Preſumption, with the Reinforcement of his Miracles, ought to have confirm'd the *Jews* in an Opinion that he was really ſo.

THE Prophecies alone did not point out our *LORD* with the utmoſt Certainty, during his Life: So that, during this Space, if his Miracles had not been deciſive Proofs, a Man would have been excuſable in diſbelieving him. It is clear, then, that Miracles perform'd are a ſufficient Evidence, when we have no contrary Argument from Doctrines deliver'd; and that they ought,

in this Caſe, to be relied upon with Aſſurance and Satisfaction.

IT was from our *Lord*'s Miracles that *Nicodemus* concluded the Divinity of his Doctrine: *Scimus quia a Deo veniſti magiſter; nemo enim poteſt hæc ſigna facere quæ tu facis, niſi fuerit Deus cum eo.*[4] He did not judge of the Miracles by the Doctrine; but of the Doctrine by the Miracles.

IF therefore a Doctrine ſhould even be ſuſpicious, (as that of our *LORD* might poſſibly be to *Nicodemus*, becauſe it ſeem'd to deſtroy the Traditions of the *Phariſees*,) yet if there are plain and undeniable Miracles on the ſame Side, the Authority of a Miracle ought to over-balance any Difficulty that can ariſe from a Doctrine: The Reaſon of which is founded upon this immovable Principle, that GOD cannot lead Men into Error.

THERE ſeems to be a reciprocal Right (if we may ſo ſpeak,) between GOD and Man. *Come now and let us reaſon together*, ſays GOD by *Iſaiah*;[5] and again by the ſame Prophet, *What could I have done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done to it?*[6]

GOD

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[4] Joh. iii. 2. [5] Iſai. i. 18. [6] Ib. ver. 4.

GOD has this Right with regard to Men, that they ſhould embrace the Religion which he is pleaſed to ſend them: And Men, by the divine Favour, ſeem to have this Right in reſpect of GOD, that he ſhould not lead them into Error.

BUT now they would unavoidably be led into Error, if a Worker of Miracles ſhould publiſh a falſe Doctrine, unleſs either the Doctrine itſelf viſibly appear'd to be falſe, or unleſs a Worker of much greater Miracles had given them an expreſs Caution againſt theſe which ſhould follow.

LET us put the Caſe of a Diviſion in the Church; and let us ſuppoſe the *Arians* (who pretended to build upon the Authority of Scripture no leſs than the *Catholicks*) to have perform'd Miracles, and the *Catholicks* none: Here Men muſt have laid under a Neceſſity of being deceiv'd: For as a Man who ſhall pretend to reveal to us the Myſteries of GOD, is not worthy to be credited on his own private Teſtimony; ſo a Man who, to juſtify his divine Commiſſion, ſhall raiſe the Dead, foretel future Events, remove Mountains, or expel Diſeaſes by human Means incurable, merits ſuch a Credit as cannot, without the Guilt of Impiety, be denied him, provided that he be not convicted of

Falſhood by ſome other Perſon, who ſhall perform ſtill greater Miracles.

BUT is not God ſaid to tempt and prove us? and may he not tempt us by Miracles wrought in the Defence of Error?

I anſwer, To tempt and to lead into Error, are very different Things: The former is conſiſtent with the divine Perfections; the latter not. To tempt is only to preſent the Occaſion; which impoſes no Neceſſity on our Belief: To lead into Error, is to put a Man under a Neceſſity of embracing that which is falſe. This is what God cannot do, and yet what muſt be done by him, ſhould he, while the Queſtion of *Doctrine* remains obſcure, lend a *Miracle* to ſtrengthen the wrong Side.

HENCE we may conclude it to be impoſſible, that a Perſon who conceals the falſe Part of his Doctrine, and publiſhes that only which is true, pretending an exact Conformity to GOD and the Church, ſhould work a Miracle, in order to the paſſing his erroneous Opinions inſenſibly upon the World: And more impoſſible it is, that GOD, who knows the Heart, ſhould vouchſafe the Power of Miracles to ſuch a Deceiver.

* THERE's a wide Diſtance between the not being for our LORD *JESUS CHRIST,*

CHRIST, and the pretending to be ſo. Some Perſons of the former Character may poſſibly be permitted to work Miracles, but none of the latter; becauſe 'tis plain of *thoſe*, that they work them againſt the Truth, but not of *theſe*; and conſequently the Miracles of the former are more clearly diſcern'd, and more eaſily condemn'd.

MIRACLES, therefore, are a ſtanding Teſt of all Things which admit of Doubt, between Pagans and *Jews*, *Jews* and *Chriſtians*, Hereticks and Catholicks, between the three Croſſes, between the Accuſer and the Accuſed.

THIS is what has been ſeen and exemplified in all the Combats of the Champions of Truth againſt thoſe of Error; of *Abel* againſt *Cain*, of *Moſes* againſt the Magicians, of *Elias* againſt the falſe Prophets; of our *LORD* againſt the *Phariſees*, of St. *Paul* againſt *Bar-Jeſus*, of the Apoſtles againſt the Exorciſts, of Chriſtians againſt Infidels, of Catholicks againſt Hereticks: And this is what ſhall be ſeen in the final Contention of *Elias* and *Enoch* againſt *Antichriſt*. In the Tryal by Miracle, Truth will always prevail.

To conclude: Thro' the whole Proceſs of the Cauſe of GOD, and of the true Religion, no one Miracle has been perform'd

on the Side of Error, but what has been vaſtly over-balanced by much greater Miracles on the Side of Truth.

WHEREFORE this Rule evinceth the Obligation which the *Jews* had to believe in *JESUS CHRIST.* Our *LORD*'s Perſon was indeed ſuſpected by them; but then the Power of his Miracles was infinitely more apparent than the Suſpicions againſt his Perſon.

* IN the Hiſtory of our *LORD*, when many believ'd on him, having ſeen the Miracles which he did, we find others diſbelieving him on account of the Prophecies, which ſpecified *Bethlehem* as the Birth-place of the *Meſſias;* whereas they ſuppoſed our *LORD* to have been born in *Nazareth.* But here they ought to have enquired more diligently, whether he who perform'd theſe mighty Works, was not, indeed, born in *Bethlehem:* For his Miracles being convictive, this pretended Oppoſition of his Doctrine to the Scriptures, and this Obſcurity, as to his Original, might contribute to their Blindneſs, but cannot be alledg'd in their Excuſe.

* OUR *LORD*, by curing him that was born blind, and performing other Miracles on the *Sabbath-Day*, ſtrengthen'd the Infatuation of the *Phariſees*, who pretended to judge of his Miracles by his Doctrine.

BUT

BUT by the Rule which obligeth us to the Belief of *JESUS CHRIST*, by the ſame we are obliged not to believe *Antichriſt*.

JESUS CHRIST ſpake neither againſt *Moſes*, nor againſt GOD. *Antichriſt* and the falſe Prophets, which are foretold both in the Old and New Teſtament, ſhall ſpeak openly againſt GOD, and againſt *JESUS CHRIST*. GOD will never permit thoſe who are even ſecretly his Enemies, to perform Miracles openly in his Name.

* *MOSES* propheſied of *JESUS CHRIST*, and commanded that he ſhould be heard and obey'd. *JESUS CHRIST* has propheſied of *Antichriſt*, and forbidden us to follow or regard him.

* THE Miracles of *JESUS CHRIST* were not foretold by *Antichriſt*, but the Miracles of *Antichriſt* are foretold by *JESUS CHRIST*. Wherefore, if *JESUS CHRIST* had not been the *Meſſias*, he had properly led Men into Error; into which no Man can with Reaſon be led by the Miracles of *Antichriſt*. And hence the Miracles of the latter cannot, in the leaſt, prejudice the Miracles of the former; as none will ſay, that our *LORD*, when he warn'd us againſt thoſe of *Anti-*

chriſt, did conceive that he ſhould hereby impair the Authority of his own.

* WE can have no poſſible Reaſon to believe in *Antichriſt*, which we have not to believe in *JESUS*; but we have infinite Reaſons to believe in *JESUS*, which we cannot poſſibly have to believe in *Antichriſt*.

* As Miracles were the Inſtruments of founding and eſtabliſhing the Church, ſo ſhall they be the Inſtruments of preſerving it to the coming of *Antichriſt*, and the Conſummation of all Things.

WHEREFORE God, to ſecure this Evidence to his Church, has either confounded all falſe Miracles, or has foretold them as ſuch; and, as well by one Means as the other, has not only rais'd himſelf above that which is ſupernatural in reſpect of us, but in ſome ſort has rais'd us up above it too.

FOR Miracles are of ſo prodigious a Force and Influence, that notwithſtanding all the Conviction which we have of the divine Exiſtence and Perfections, it is ſtill neceſſary that GOD ſhould warn us not to credit them, when they make againſt himſelf; without which Caution, they might be able to perplex and miſlead us.

So that the ſeveral Paſſages in *Deuteronomy* xiii. prohibiting all Belief or Attention

tion to thoſe who ſhould work Miracles, in order to prevert Men from the Worſhip of the true GOD; as alſo that Caution in St. *Mark* [7], *There ſhall ariſe falſe Chriſts and falſe Prophets, who ſhall do many notable Signs, ſo as to ſeduce, if poſſible, the very Elect*, with many Texts of the like Import, are ſo far from leſſening the Authority of true Miracles, that they are the higheſt Confirmation of their Force and Efficacy.

* THE Ground of disbelieving true Miracles, is the Want of Charity: *Ye believe not*, (ſays our *LORD* to the *Jews*) *becauſe ye are not of my Sheep* [8]. The Ground of believing falſe Miracles, is the Want of the ſame Charity. *Eo quod Charitatem veritatis non receperunt, ut ſalvi fierent, ideo mittet illis Deus operationem erroris, ut credant mendacio* [9].

* WHEN I am conſidering, what may be the Reaſon that Men afford Credit to ſo many Cheats in Phyſick, and even put their Lives into their Hands, it appears to me to be no other than this, that there are ſuch Things in the World as true and real Medicines; becauſe otherwiſe 'twould be impoſſible, that theſe which are falſe and feign'd ſhould

[7] xiii. 22. [8] John x. 26. [9] Theſſ. ii. 10.

ſhould ſo much abound, or be ſo much depended on. For were there no ſuch Things, and were all Diſtempers indeed incurable, either no Perſon would be ſo extravagant as to think himſelf Maſter of theſe Remedies, or much leſs would ſo many others be deluded by his Pretenſions. As if a Man ſhould give out, that he has an infallible Antidote againſt dying; 'tis not likely his Practice ſhould grow conſiderable, till he could produce a viſible Inſtance of its Succeſs. But in as much as there is certainly a great Number of Remedies, which have been approv'd by the Knowlege and Experience of the wiſeſt Men, this gives a Ply to human Belief; and becauſe the Thing cannot be denied in general, on account of particular Effects, the Multitude being unable to diſtinguiſh which of theſe particular Effects are true, ſwallows them all in groſs. As the Reaſon why Men aſcribe ſo many falſe Effects to the Moon, is becauſe ſhe has indeed ſome real Influences, as in the ebbing and flowing of the Sea.

IN the ſame Manner, and with the like Evidence, I conclude, that there could never have been ſo many pretended Miracles, Revelations, Lots, *&c.* but on account of others which were real; nor ſo many falſe Religions, but with regard to one

one which is the true. For were there nothing in this whole Matter, it had been impoſſible for ſome to have entertain'd ſuch Conceits, and more impoſſible for others to credit what theſe ſhould have conceiv'd. But becauſe there had been very ſignal Events of the like Nature, which were undoubtedly genuine, and acknowledg'd as ſuch by the wiſeſt and greateſt amongſt Men, it was this Impreſſion which rendered the whole World ſo capable of admitting thoſe that were ſpurious. And therefore, inſtead of arguing from the falſe Miracles againſt the true, we ought, on the contrary, to infer theſe from thoſe, and to aſſure ourſelves, that Forgery and Falſehood are the Shadows which have ever follow'd Truth and Reality. And all this depends upon one natural Principle, that the Soul of Man having been once brought to ſuch a Tendency and Inclination by that which is juſt and ſolid, becomes ever after ſuſceptible of what is ſpecious and counterfeit.

* We are commanded to hear the Church, but not to hearken to Miracles; becauſe the latter Action is natural, and therefore wanted not an additional Precept, which the former, being more arbitrary, ſeem'd to require.

* THERE are ſo very few to whom GOD makes himſelf known by theſe amazing

Strokes of his Power, that Men are in the higheſt Manner obliged to make uſe of ſo extraordinary Occaſions. For the Reaſon why he is pleaſed thus to come out of the awful Retirements of his Nature, is only that he may increaſe our Faith, and may engage us to ſerve him ſtill with the more Ardour, as we know him with the more Certainty.

*SHOULD God continually reveal himſelf to Men by viſible Diſcoveries, Faith would ceaſe *to be a Virtue*; and ſhould he afford them no ſuch Diſcoveries, it would almoſt ceaſe *to be:* And therefore we find, that as for the moſt part he dwells in Secret, ſo he diſcloſes himſelf on ſome rare Occaſions, when he would more ſtrictly engage Men in his Service. This wonderful Myſtery, impenetrable to any mortal Eye, under which God is pleas'd to ſhade his Glories, may excite us powerfully to a Love of Solitude and Silence, and of Retirement from the View of the World. Before the *Incarnation* God remain'd hidden in the Receſſes of his Divinity; and after it he became, in ſome Reſpects, more hidden, by putting on the Veil of our Humanity. It had been eaſier to have known him while inviſible, than when he convers'd in a viſible Shape: And at length, deſigning to accompliſh the Promiſe which he made to his Apoſtles, of continuing with the Church till his ſecond Coming, he choſe a Concealment

cealment more ſtrange and obſcure than either of the former, under the Species of the *Euchariſt.* 'Tis this Sacrament which St. *John*, in his *Apocalypſe*, calls the *hidden Manna*, and to which *Iſaiah* perhaps alluded, when he cried out, by his Prophetick Spirit, *Verily thou art a GOD that hideſt thyſelf.* This is the laſt myſterious Covering which he will aſſume. The Veil of the divine Eſſence has been penetrated by many Heathens and Infidels, of whom St. *Paul* teſtifies, that they were led into the Knowledge of the inviſible GOD, by the Contemplation of viſible Nature. Many heretical *Chriſtians* have known him thro' the Robe of his Humanity, and have worſhipp'd *JESUS CHRIST*, as GOD and Man. But for us, we ought eſpecially to eſteem ourſelves happy in that it has pleas'd God to enlighten us to ſuch a Degree, as to be able to diſcern him under the Species of Bread and Wine.

WE may add to theſe Conſiderations the Secret of GOD's holy Spirit, as conceal'd in the Scriptures. For whereas there are two entire Senſes, a literal and a myſtical, the *Jews* reſting in the former, never ſo much as think that there is another, nor apply themſelves to ſearch after it. In the ſame Manner wicked and impious Perſons, beholding the Variety of natural Effects, referr'd them to Nature only, without confeſſing

feſſing the Author of both: So likewiſe the *Jews*, obſerving only the human Nature in *Chriſt*, did not ſeek for another. *We thought not that it was he*, ſays *Iſaiah*, in their Name. There is nothing in the World but what covers and contains ſome Myſtery. The whole Creation is but the Veil of the Creator. *Chriſtians* ought, in every Appearance, to ſee and acknowledge him. Temporal Afflictions overſhadow thoſe eternal Goods to which they lead: Temporal Enjoyments cover and diſguiſe thoſe eternal Evils which they procure. Let us pray GOD that he would grant us the Power of knowing him in all Things; and let us render him infinite Thanks, that being in every Object hidden from ſo many others, he ſhould vouchſafe under every Object, and by every Method, to diſcloſe himſelf to *us*.

XXVIII.

Chriſtian *Thoughts.*

LIBERTINES and ungodly Men, who devote themſelves blindly to their own Paſſions, without either knowing GOD, or giving themſelves the Trouble to ſearch after him,

him, do yet verify by this their Conduct, one of thoſe Foundations of our Faith, which they particularly oppoſe, that the preſent State of human Nature is a State of Corruption. Again, the *Jews*, who with ſo obſtinate a Spirit reſiſt the Evidences of Chriſtianity, confirm in like Manner the other great Foundation of our Faith, which they principally endeavour to deſtroy, that *JESUS CHRIST* is the true *Meſſias*, that he came to redeem Mankind, and to retrieve us from the Miſery and Corruption into which we were fallen. And this, as well by the Eſtate to which we ſee them at preſent reduced, and which was foretold in their own Prophecies, as by theſe Prophecies themſelves, which are ſtill in their Hands, and which with the utmoſt Caution they preſerve inviolable, as containing the proper Marks and Character of their *Meſſias*. Thus may the chief Evidences, both of the Corruption of human Nature, and of the Redemption by *JESUS CHRIST*, which are the two leading Articles eſtabliſh'd by the *Chriſtian* Faith, be drawn from the Libertines, who caſt off the Care of all Religion; and from the *Jews*, who are irreconcilable Enemies to the true.

* THE Dignity of Man, under his primitive Innocence, conſiſted in governing and

and uſing the Creatures; but, under his preſent Corruption, it conſiſts in retiring from them, or in ſubmitting to them, and to his own Neceſſities and Infirmities.

* THERE are a great Number of Truths in Faith, and in Morals, which have an Appearance of utter Repugnancy, and which nevertheleſs, in a wonderful Order, do all happily conſiſt and conſpire with each other.

THE Ground of all Hereſy is the Denial of ſome of theſe Truths; and the Sourſe of all the Objections made by Hereticks againſt the Catholick Church is the Ignorance of ſome of theſe Truths, which ſhe conſtantly maintains.

IT happens, for the moſt part, that heretical Men, not being able to conceive the Union and Harmony of two ſeemingly oppoſite Truths, and ſuppoſing that the Admiſſion of the one implies the Excluſion of the other, the one they embrace, and the other, by the ſame Principle, they reject

THE *Neſtorians* ſuppoſed two Perſons in *JESUS CHRIST*, on account of his two Natures; and the *Eutychians*, on the contrary, but one Nature, on account of his ſingle Perſon. The *Catholicks* preſerve the right Judgment, by joining together both Truths, of the two Natures, and of the one Perſon.

So

So that the ſhorteſt Way to prevent Hereſies is expreſly to teach all Truths; and the ſureſt Method of confuting Hereſies, is to ſhew in what they conſiſt, and upon what miſtaken Hypotheſis they proceed.

* GRACE and Nature will ever maintain their Contention in the World. There will be always *Pelagians*, and there will be always *Catholicks*; becauſe the firſt Birth conſtitutes the one, and the ſecond Birth the other.

* IT is the Church, which together with *JESUS CHRIST*, to whom ſhe is inſeparably united, merits the Converſion of all thoſe who are in Error. And thoſe, at length, approve themſelves the trueſt Converts, who labour for the Safety of their Mother, from whom they firſt derived their own.

* THE Body can no more live without the Head, than the Head without the Body. He that ſeparates from the one, or the other, is no longer of the Body, nor a Member of *JESUS CHRIST*. All Virtues, all Auſterity, all good Works, and even Martyrdom itſelf, are of no Worth out of the Church, and out of Communion with the Head of the Church.

* THIS ſhall be one amongſt the Horrors and Confuſions of the Wicked in another

ther Life, to see themselves condemn'd by their own Reason, by which they pretended to condemn the Christian Religion.

* We ought to judge what is good or evil by the Will of God, which is always just, and always infallible, and not by our own Will, which is so byas'd with Prejudice, and so blinded with Error.

* Our *LORD* in his Gospel has given this amongst other Marks of those who should believe in his Name, that they shall speak with new Tongues: And indeed the Renovation of Thoughts and Desires naturally causeth that of Speech. These new Productions, (which cannot be displeasing to God, as the old Man cannot possibly please him,) are very different from the Novelties of the World, because the latter, how fresh and fair soever, are subject to Age and Decay; whereas the former, (the Fruits of the new Spirit,) the longer they continue, the more they still improve in Freshness and Beauty. *Our old Man perisheth*, (says St. *Paul*,) *and our new Man is renew'd Day by Day*; nor shall we be compleatly new till our Renovation in Eternity, when we shall, without ceasing, sing *David's new Song*, the Song inspired by the new Spirit of Charity.

* When St. *Peter* and the other Apostles consulted about the Abolishment of Circumcision

cumcision, where the Point in Debate was the acting contrary to the Law of God, they did not refer themselves to the Prophets, but consider'd barely the Gift of the Holy Ghost pour'd out on Persons uncircumcised. They judg'd it more certain, that God approved of those whom he filled with his Spirit, than that he required in all Instances an exact and literal Observation of the Law. They knew the very End of the *Law* to be no other than the *Spirit*, and concluded, that since Men were capable of the latter without Circumcision, they wanted not the Preparation of the former.

* Two plain Laws might be more effectual in regulating the whole Christian Community, than all political Institutions, the Love of God, and of our Neighbour.

* Religion has somewhat in it which is adapted and proportion'd to Genius's of every Size. The Generality of Men look no farther than its present Condition and Settlement in the World. And the Nature of Christianity is such, that its very Establishment is an invincible Argument of its Truth. The Learned and Knowing are able to trace it up to the Beginning of the World. The Angels still proceed to a nobler Height, and contemplate the original Plan in the Mind of the divine Author.

* THOSE whom GOD has inſpired with the Grace of Religion in their Hearts and Affections, are moſt entirely convinced, and moſt completely bleſſed. But as for thoſe who have not yet attain'd it, we have no way of recommending it to them, but by Reaſon and Argument; waiting till GOD ſhall pleaſe to imprint an inward Feeling of it on their Hearts; without which, all Faith, as it is only the Conviction of the Underſtanding, is unprofitable to Salvation.

* GOD Almighty, to reſerve to himſelf the ſole Right of inſtructing us, and to render the Difficulties of our own Being unintelligible to us, has laid the Knot ſo high, or, to ſpeak more properly, ſo low, that we cannot reach to untie it. So that it is not by the Exerciſe and Agitation, but by the bare Submiſſion and Acquieſcence of our Reaſon, that we are made capable of truly knowing ourſelves.

* LIBERTINES, who make a Profeſſion of being wholly guided by Reaſon, ought certainly to be fortified with the greateſt Strength of Reaſon. Let us hear, then, what they have to offer. "Don't you obſerve (ſay they) that Beaſts live and die like Men; and *Turks* like Chriſtians? Have not the Followers of *Mahomet* their Ceremonies, their Prophets, their Doctors,

" Doctors, their Saints, their Religious Or-
" ders, as well as we? *&c.*" But is any Thing of this contrary to Scripture? Or, *ſaith not the Scripture the ſame alſo?* If you are fairly reſolv'd to eaſe yourſelves of all Trouble in the Knowledge of Truth, I confeſs here's enough to keep you in Suſpence and Indifference. But if you deſire with your whole Heart to know it, here's by no means enough; you ought to go to the Bottom, and to enquire with the greateſt Strictneſs into each Particular. The Difficulties you alledge, might be ſufficient to unſettle a vain Queſtion of Philoſophy; but here the Subject of Debate is all your Intereſt and Happineſs. And yet, after ſome ſlight Reflexions of this Nature, Men are contented to amuſe themſelves, *&c.* ****

* WHAT can be more ſhocking, than to feel all our Poſſeſſions continually ſliding thro' our Hands, and yet to acquieſce in this wretched Poverty, and to entertain no Deſire of ſecuring a more fix'd and durable Treaſure?

* THERE are two contrary Suppoſitions which ought to engage us in quite different Methods of Life; One, that 'tis poſſible for us to abide here for ever: The other, that 'tis certain we cannot remain here long, and uncertain whether we ſhall not be removed hence the next Hour. The laſt of

theſe Suppoſitions belongs manifeſtly to our Caſe.

* You lie under an indiſpenſable Obligation to make gradual Advances in the Search of Truth. For, if you go out of the World without having paid a due Veneration to its Author, you are loſt for ever. "But (ſay you) had he deſign'd that I "ſhould pay him this Veneration, he would "not have fail'd to leave me ſome undoubted "Tokens of his Will." Why, he has really left them; but you are careleſs of ſeeking them: At leaſt, therefore, be ſo rational as to think it worth your Pains to ſeek them.

* An Atheiſt ought to offer nothing but what is perfectly clear and evident. But a Man muſt have loſt all his Senſes, before he can affirm it to be perfectly clear and evident that the Soul is mortal. I freely diſown the Neceſſity of diving into *Copernicus*'s Syſtem: But I maintain, that it concerns us more than our Life is worth, to enquire whether the Soul is mortal or immortal.

* Who can do otherwiſe than admire and embrace a Religion which contains the complete Knowledge of ſuch Truths, as we firſt know the more ſurely according to the greater Proportions of our Capacity and Light?

* A Perſon diſcovering the Proofs of the Chriſtian Religion, is like an Heir finding the

the Deeds and Evidences of his Eſtate. Shall he officiouſly condemn them as counterfeit, or caſt them aſide without Examination?

* I ſee no greater Difficulty that there is in the Reſurrection of the Dead, or the Conception of the Virgin, than in the Creation of the World. Is not the Re-production of human Bodies as eaſy as the firſt Production? Or, ſuppoſing us to be ignorant of the natural Method of Generation, ſhould we think it more ſtrange to ſee a Child from a Woman only, than from a Man and a Woman?

* THERE is a great Difference between Peace of Conſcience, and Aſſurance of Conſcience. The former may be obtain'd by the ſincere Search of Truth; the latter only by Truth itſelf, when actually poſſeſs'd.

* THERE are two Maxims of Faith equally fix'd and unalterable; the one, that Man in his State of Creation, (or, in that of Grace,) is rais'd above all viſible Nature, made like unto GOD, and a Partaker of the Divinity: The other, that Man in his State of Corruption and Sin, is fallen from this Pitch of Greatneſs, into a Reſemblance with the Beaſts. Theſe two Propoſitions are alike firm and certain: The holy Scripture bears a poſitive Teſtimony to both. For, in ſome Places we read, *My Delight is*

with the Sons of Men[1]*: I will pour out my Spirit upon all Fleſh*[2]*. I have ſaid ye are Gods*[3], &c. but in others, *All Fleſh is Graſs*[4]*. Man is like unto the Beaſts that periſh*[5]*. I ſaid in my Heart, concerning the Eſtate of the Sons of Men, that GOD might manifeſt them, and that they themſelves are Beaſts*[6].

* To diſengage ourſelves from our native Infirmities, is always painful and grievous. We feel not our Chain (ſays St. *Auſtin*) while we voluntarily follow our Leader. But when we begin to reſiſt, and to draw back, it is then we become Sufferers; it is then our Chain ſtretcheth itſelf, and endures the utmoſt Violence. And this Chain is our Body, which Death alone can break. Our *LORD* obſerv'd, that before the Coming of St. *John* Baptiſt, the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffer'd Violence, and the Violent took it by Force. Before we are touch'd from on High, we have nothing but the Weight of our own Concupiſcence, which naturally bears us down to the Earth. But when GOD is pleas'd to draw us up towards himſelf, theſe two contrary Efforts make that Violence which we are ſpeaking of, and which GOD alone is able to overcome. *But we can do all Things* (in the

[1] Prov. viii. 31. [2] Joel ii. 28. [3] Pſalm lxxxii. 6. [4] If. xl. 6. [5] Pſalm xlix. 12. [6] Eccleſ. iii. 18.

the Words of an Ancient Father[7],) *with him, without whom we can do nothing.* We ſhould therefore prepare ourſelves, with the greateſt Reſolution, to ſuffer this Warfare during our Life; becauſe we are not here permitted to hope for Peace. *JESUS CHRIST* came *to bring not Peace, but a Sword.* Yet ought we to acknowledge, that, as the Scriptture ſays, *the Wiſdom of Men is Fooliſhneſs with GOD,* ſo this War may be term'd a Peace with GOD, how uneaſy ſoever it may ſeem to Men; and of ſuch a Peace may our Lord be ſtyl'd the Author and Prince. Yet the Perfection of this Peace cannot be attain'd till the Deſtruction and Diſſolution of the Body. And 'tis hence that we may be allow'd to wiſh for Death; yet ſo as courageouſly to ſuſtain and ſuffer Life, for the Love of him, who ſuffer'd both Life and Death on our Behalf, and *who,* in the Apoſtle's Phraſe, is *able to do for us abundantly above what we can ask or think.*

* WE ſhould ſtrive to bring ourſelves to ſuch a Temper, as not to be troubled at any Occurrence, but to take every Event for the beſt. I apprehend this to be a neceſſary Duty, and the Neglect of it to be properly a Sin. For the Reaſon why we term

[7] *S. Leo.*

term any Thing ſinful, is taken from its Repugnancy to the Will of God. If then the very Eſſence of Sin conſiſts in cheriſhing a Will, which we know to be contrary to that of God, it ſeems clear to me, that when he is pleas'd to diſcover his Will to us by Events, we are juſtly reputed Sinners, if we conform not ourſelves by a ready Compliance and Submiſſion.

* When Truth is deſerted and perſecuted, this ſeems to be the Time that the Service which we yield to God in its Defence is peculiarly acceptable. He permits us to judge of Grace by the Compariſons of Nature. And as a Prince dethroned by his own Subjects, retains a moſt tender Affection for thoſe who continue faithful to him in the publick Revolt; ſo we may preſume to conceive, that God will ever regard thoſe with a peculiar Goodneſs, who maintain the Purity of Religion, when it is, on all Sides, attack'd or oppreſs'd. But here's the Difference between the Kings of the Earth, and the King of Kings; that the Princes of this World do not make their Subjects loyal, but find them ſo; whereas God never finds Men otherwiſe than diſloyal and unfaithful, without the Succours of his Grace, and is therefore himſelf the Author of all their Conſtancy and Truth. So that while temporal Monarchs are wont

to

to own an Obligation to those who persist resolutely in their Allegiance and Duty; those, on the contrary, who persevere in the Service of GOD, are under infinite Obligations to him, for the very Power of their Perseverance.

* Nor the most rigorous Austerities of Body, nor the most profound Exercises of Mind, are able to support the Pains and Grievances of both, but only the good Affections of the Heart and Spirit. For in short, the two great Instruments of Sanctification are Pains and Pleasures. St. *Paul* informs us, That *all those who will live godly in the Lord* JESUS CHRIST, must suffer Persecution. Now this ought to comfort as many as feel these Disquiets, and encounter these Difficulties in a Course of holy Living, because being assured that the Path to Heaven, which they seek, is full of them, they have Reason to rejoice at their finding so many Marks of the true Way. So that these Pains are not without their Pleasures, by which alone they can be balanced or counterveil'd. For as those who forsake GOD to return to the World, do it because they find more Complacency in earthly Delights, than in the Satisfaction of being united to the divine Nature; and because this fatal Charm drawing them after it as its Captives, obliges them to relinquish

linquiſh their firſt Love, and renders them, as *Tertullian* ſpeaks, *the Penitents of the Devil;* in like manner, there would be none found who ſhould abandon the Enjoyments of the World, to embrace the Croſs of *JESUS CHRIST*, did they not feel a more real Sweetneſs, in Contempt, in Poverty, in Nakedneſs, and in the Scorn and Rejection of Men, than all the Delicacies and Pleaſures of Sin. And therefore, as the ſame Father obſerves, *We injure the chriſtian Life, if we ſuppoſe it to be a Life of Sadneſs and Sorrow. Becauſe we never quit our Engagements to any one Pleaſure, without being invited and bribed by a greater. Pray without ceaſing,* (ſays St. *Paul,*) *in every Thing give Thanks, rejoice ever more.* It is the Joy of finding GOD which is the Spring of our Sorrow, for having forſaken him, and of our whole Change in Life and Action. He that has found a Treaſure in the Field, (according to the Parable of our *LORD,*) is ſo transported as to *go and ſell all that he has, and buy that Field.* Worldly Men have their Share of Sorrow, but then they are utterly excluded from true Joy, that which the World can neither give nor take away. On the other Hand, the Saints in Heaven poſſeſs their Joy without ſorrowing. And good Men on Earth partake of

the ſame Joy, not without a Mixture and Allay of Sorrow, for having follow'd other Joys, and for fear of loſing the former in the latter, which inceſſantly ſolicite and engage their Affections. We ſhould therefore with unintermitted Pains and Care endeavour to preſerve this Sorrow ever freſh and lively in our Breaſts, as that alone which can ſecure and moderate our Joy; and as oft as we find ourſelves carried too far towards the one, to ſway and incline ourſelves towards the other; that we may maintain the Balance, and keep ourſelves upright. It is agreeable to the Advice of Scripture, that we ſhould remember our Rejoicings in the Days of Affliction, and our Afflictions in the Days of Rejoicing; till the Promiſe which our *LORD* has given us of making his Joy perfect in us be happily accompliſh'd. In the mean while, let us not ſuffer ourſelves to be ſwallow'd up of overmuch Sorrow, nor imagine that Piety conſiſts in Bitterneſs without Conſolation. True Piety, which receives not its Completion but in Heaven, is yet ſo full of Satisfaction and Delight, as to overflow its Beginning, its Progreſs, and its Crown. It is a Light ſo reſplendent as to dart ſome Rays of Brightneſs through its whole Compaſs and Sphere. If, in its Riſe eſpecially, it be ſhaded with

ſome

ſome Intermixture of Grief, this proceeds from the Perſons not from the Virtue, and muſt be look'd on, not as the Firſtfruits of that Piety which is now forming in us, but as the Reliques of that Impiety which is not yet deſtroy'd. Could we root out the Impiety, the Joy would flouriſh and thrive. Let us therefore aſcribe the Origin of our Sadneſs not to Religion, but to ourſelves; and let us ſeek our Comfort in our own Correction.

* WHAT is paſt ought to give us no Uneaſineſs, except that of Repentance for our Faults. And what is to come ought much leſs to affect us, becauſe, with regard to us and our Concerns, it is not, and perhaps will never be. The preſent is the only Time which is properly ours; and this we ought to uſe in Conformity to the Will of him that gives it. Here, therefore our Thoughts and Studies ſhould principally be engaged: Yet the World is generally of ſo reſtleſs a Diſpoſition, that Men ſcarce ever fix upon the preſent, nor think of the Minutes which they are now living, but of thoſe which they are to live. Thus we are always in the Diſpoſition of Life, but never in the Act. Our *LORD* has caution'd us, that our Forecaſt ſhould not extend beyond the Compaſs of a Day. Theſe are the Limits which we

we ought to observe, as for the sake of our spiritual Welfare, so even for that of our natural Quiet and Repose.

* The Reformation of ourselves is often more effectually assisted by the Sight of Evil, than by the Example of Good. The Art of profiting by Evil must be of admirable Use, because the Occasions of it are so frequent and numerous; whereas the Subjects of virtuous Imitation are so few in Number, and do so rarely occur.

* In the thirteenth Chapter of St. *Mark*, our *LORD* discourses at large to his Disciples about his second Coming. And as whatever happens to the Church, happens likewise in some Manner and Proportion to every Christian, so is it certain, that this whole Chapter describes as well the State of each regenerated Person, and the Destruction of the old Man in him, as the State of the Universe, which shall be destroy'd to give way to the new Heavens and new Earth, according to the Word of Scripture. The Prediction concerning the Ruin of the Temple when forsaken by God, (which is the Figure of the rejected and reprobate Body of Sin, dwelling in every one of us,) and the Expression of *not leaving one Stone upon another*, teach us, that we ought to leave no Affection of the old Man unmortified or unremoved. And

thoſe Wars and Tumults, thoſe Contentions, Civil and Domeſtick, are ſo lively a Repreſentation of the inward Troubles which Men feel at their Converſion, that no Colours could have painted them to more Advantage.

* THE holy Spirit reſides inviſibly in the Remains of thoſe who are departed in the Grace of GOD, till he ſhall appear viſibly in them at the Reſurrection. And 'tis hence that the Reliques of the Saints become worthy of Regard: For GOD will never leave or forſake thoſe that are truly *his*, not even in the Grave, where their Bodies, which are dead to the Eyes of Men, do now more properly live in the Sight of GOD; being deliver'd from that Sin which ever dwelt in them during this Life, as to the Root, tho' not ever as to the Fruits and Effects. And this Root of Bitterneſs, which is inſeparable from their Bodies before their Deceaſe, makes thoſe Bodies ſo long incapable of Honour, as being till then more worthy of Hatred and Reproach. Death alone can entirely ſuppreſs that unhappy Root, and is, upon this Conſideration, to be choſen rather than Life.

* AT the final Judgment, the Elect ſhall be ignorant of their own Virtues, and the Reprobate of their own Crimes. Both ſhall join in that Part of the Anſwer, *LORD, when ſaw we thee an hungry?* &c.

* *JESUS CHRIST* refuſed the Teſtimony not only of evil Spirits, but even of ſuch Men as had not a lawful Calling and expreſs Commiſſion for that Purpoſe; being ſatisfied with the Witneſs of GOD, and of St. *John Baptiſt*.

* WHEN I have been going to ſet down my Thought, it has ſometimes eſcaped me in the very writing. But this Accident, reminding me of my Weakneſs, which I am continually inclined to forget, is a Leſſon as inſtructive to me as the loſt Thought could have proved; becauſe the whole Aim of my Study is to diſcover my own Feebleneſs, and Vanity, and Nothing.

* *MONTAIGN* is a Writer moſt groſsly faulty. He abounds in lewd and incident Expreſſions. Let this paſs for nothing. But then his Thoughts on Self-Murder, and on Death, are ſuch as we cannot read without Horror. He inſinuates an idle Indifference as to the Affair of our Salvation, without Care of Repentance, and yet without Fear of Danger. Indeed his Work not being compoſed on a Deſign purely religious, he was not obliged to give Men expreſs Admonitions to Piety, but he was indiſpenſably obliged not to diſcourage them from it. Were we able to apologize for his Libertine Thoughts on all other Subjects, yet 'twould be impoſſible to alledge any ſort of Excuſe for his Pagan

Reflections upon Death. For a Man muſt have utterly abandon'd all Goodneſs, if he deſire not at leaſt to die like a Chriſtian; and yet a Death of Indolence and Inconſideration is the Wiſh that runs thro' *Montaign*'s whole Performance.

* THAT which deceives us in our Compariſons between the Examples of the ancient Church, and the Practice of the modern, is, that we are wont, for the moſt part, to conſider *Athanaſius*, *Tereſa*, and other holy Perſons, as they are now crown'd with Glory. At preſent, indeed, when Time has clear'd up the Event, their Condition is ſuch as we deſcribe it in our Mind. But when that great Saint was perſecuted, it was a meer Man who bore the Name of *Athanaſius*; and when that pious Virgin pray'd, ſhe differ'd not from the religious Siſters of her Order. *Elias was a Man of like Paſſions as we are*, ſays St. *James*; to wean us from that falſe Idea which prompts us to excuſe our ſelves from the Patterns of holy Men, as diſproportion'd to our Eſtate and Degree. They were Saints, (we cry) and not Men of our imperfect Character, and unexalted Virtue!

* IN dealing with thoſe who have at preſent an Averſion to Religion, we ought to begin with ſhewing them, that it is by no means contrary to Reaſon; in the next place, we

we ſhould convince them, that it is great and venerable, and inſpire them with Reverence towards it; after this, we ſhould deſcribe it as highly charming and lovely, to engage their Wiſhes for its Truth; and then we may proceed to demonſtrate by irrefragable Proofs that it is true; we may evince its Antiquity and Holineſs from its awful Majeſty and ſublime Elevation; and laſtly, may make it appear to be truly amiable, in that it promiſeth our only Good and Happineſs.

* WE ſhall ſometimes find one ſingle Expreſſion of *David* or of *Moſes*, (as for inſtance, that of the latter, *GOD will circumciſe the Foreskin of your Hearts*) which ſhall be ſufficient to ſettle their Character, and to manifeſt the Spirit by which they wrote. Suppoſing all their other Diſcourſes to be ambiguous, and to leave a Doubt whether they ſpake by the Meaſures of Philoſophy, or by thoſe of Inſpiration, one Word of this kind is ſufficient to determine all the reſt. Here the Cloud muſt vaniſh, tho' All ſhould have ſeem'd obſcure before.

* SHOULD a Man happen to err in ſuppoſing the Chriſtian Religion to be true, he could be no Loſer by the Miſtake. But how irrecoverable is *his* Loſs, how inexpreſſible *his* Danger, who ſhould err in ſuppoſing it to be falſe!

* THE moſt eaſy Rules of Living, with reſpect to the World, are the moſt difficult with reſpect to GOD; and ſo *vice verſa*. The Duties of Religion are the greateſt Pains of a Life which is merely ſecular, and the greateſt Pleaſures of a Life which is holy and divine. Nothing is ſo natural and agreeable whilſt we live in conformity to the World, as to be poſſeſs'd of high Dignities and ample Revenues; nothing is ſo laborious and difficult, while we live according to the Will of GOD, as to poſſeſs theſe Advantages, without an irregular Taſte, and unwarrantable Satisfaction.

THE Old Teſtament exhibits to us the Figures of our future Happineſs; the New preſcribes to us the means of attaining it. The Figures were thoſe of Pleaſure and Joy; the Means are thoſe of Sadneſs and Repentance. And yet under the former, the *Paſchal Lamb* was eaten *with bitter Herbs*, (*cum amaritudinibus*) to teach us, that there is no arriving at true Joy, but by holy Sorrow.

* THE Word *Galilee* happening to be thrown out by the *Jewiſh* Rabble before *Pilate*, in their Cry againſt our LORD, occaſion'd the ſending him to *Herod*, in which the Myſtery of his being judg'd by Jews and Gentiles receiv'd its Completion. Thus a meer

meer Accident, in appearance, procured the Completion of the Prophecy.

* Two Perſons coming from Confeſſion, one of them told me that he was full of Joy and Satisfaction; the other, that he was full of Trouble and Fear. Upon which I remember my ſelf to have paſs'd this Reflection, that theſe two Men put together would make one good one; and that each was ſo far defective, in that he had not the Sentiments of the other.

* WE could not but feel a very peculiar Pleaſure in being toſs'd by a Tempeſt, while the Veſſel was infallibly ſecured from ſinking. Such a Veſſel is the Church, ſuch Tempeſts are its Perſecutions.

* As the two great Sources of all Sin are Pride and Negligence, ſo GOD has been pleas'd to diſcloſe two of his Attributes for their Cure, his Mercy, and his Juſtice. The Office and Effect of his Juſtice is to abaſe and mortifie our Pride; and the Office and Effect of his Mercy, is to prevail on our Negligence, and excite us to good Works. *The Goodneſs of GOD leadeth to Repentance.* And, *let us repent*, (ſay the *Ninevites*) *and ſee if He will not have Mercy on us.* Thus the Conſideration of the Divine Mercy is ſo far from being an Encouragement to Sloth and Remiſſneſs, that it is the greateſt Spur to Induſtry and Action: And

inſtead of ſaying, " If our God were not a " merciful God we ought to bend our ut- " moſt Endeavours towards the fulfilling " his Commands, it is rational to ſay, be- " cauſe we ſerve a God of Mercy and Pity, " therefore we ought to labour with all our " Strength to yield him an acceptable Ser- " vice."

* THE Hiſtory of the Church ought emphatically to be ſtiled, *the Hiſtory of Truth.*

* ALL that is in the World, is *the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eyes*, or, *the Pride of Life: Libido ſentiendi, libido ſciendi, libido dominandi.* Miſerable is that accurſed Earth which theſe three Rivers of Fire do not refreſh, but burn! Happy thoſe who remain upon theſe Rivers in immoveable Safety, without being overwhelm'd, or carried away with the Stream; not ſtanding erect, but ſitting on a ſure and humble Seat, whence they riſe not till *the Day ſpring from on high*, when, having reſted in Peace, they ſtretch forth their Hands to him who will lift them up, and cauſe them to ſtand upright in the Porches of the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, where they ſhall be for ever ſecure from the Aſſaults of Pride! And yet are theſe happy Saints at preſent in Tears; not to ſee all theſe periſhable things vaniſhing and paſſing away, but at the Remembrance of their dear Country, the *Jeruſalem* which

is

is above, after which they ſigh inceſſantly, while the Days of their Pilgrimage are prolong'd.

* A Miracle, ſays the Sceptic, would confirm my wavering Belief. Men talk after this manner about things at a diſtance. But thoſe Reaſons, which being view'd afar off ſeem the Boundaries of our Sight, do yet ceaſe to bound it, upon our Approach. We diſcover ſtill a new Scene beyond; and no Proſpect can ſtop the endleſs Activity of our Spirit. There is no general Rule (we cry) without an Exception; and no Truth ſo bright and ſolid, as not to have in ſome part, the Diſadvantage of a Flaw. If Principles be not abſolutely univerſal, we have ſufficient Pretence to apply the Exception to the Caſe before us; and by this means we evade all the Force of Conviction.

* CHARITY is no figurative Precept. To ſay that *JESUS CHRIST*, who came to take away the Figure, and to eſtabliſh the Truth, came to introduce a figurative Charity, and to remove the true and real, which was before in poſſeſſion, is a Doctrine not to be entertain'd or endur'd.

* THE *Heart* has its Arguments and Motives, with which the *Reaſon* is not acquainted. We feel this in a thouſand Inſtances. It is the Heart, and not the Reaſon, which has properly the Perception of GOD;

God, ſenſible to the Heart, is the moſt compendious Deſcription of true and perfect Faith.

* IN the Time of Affliction, the Knowledge of external things will never comfort us under the Ignorance of Morality: But the Knowledge of Morality will always comfort us under the Ignorance of external things.

* THE Nature of Man is ſo framed, that not only by often hearing himſelf call'd a Fool, he believes it; but by often calling himſelf a Fool, he enters into the ſame Opinion. Every Perſon holds an inward and ſecret Converſation with his own Breaſt, and ſuch as it highly concerns him well to regulate, becauſe even in this Senſe, *Evil Communications corrupt good Manners.* To ſtudy Silence, as much as poſſible, and to converſe with God alone, is the true Art of Perſwaſion, in reſpect of our ſelves.

* WHERE's the Difference between a Soldier and a Carthuſian, as to the Point of Obedience? They are equally under Duty, and engaged in Labours equally painful and grievous. But then the Soldier all along hopes to be his own Maſter; and tho' he never compaſſes his Aim, (becauſe Captains, and even Princes, are always ſlaviſh and depending) yet he ſtill wiſheth for Liberty, and uſeth his whole Endeavour to attain it. Whereas the Carthuſian, on the contrary, makes

makes a ſolemn Vow never to be at his own Diſpoſal and Direction. The neceſſity of perpetual Servitude is the ſame in both Perſons; only, the one ever deſires, what the other has for ever renounced.

* OUR own Will, tho' it ſhould obtain its largeſt Wiſh, would always keep us in Uneaſineſs. But the very Inſtant that we abandon our own Will, we grow eaſy. We can never be ſatisfied with it, nor ever diſſatisfied without it.

* 'TIS very unjuſt that Perſons ſhould build ſo much on our Familiarity, though they do it with real Inclination and Delight. We deceive all thoſe whom we encourage in ſuch a Dependence. Becauſe we are not, at laſt, the Perſons they ſuppoſe, and can by no means be able to ſatisfy their Expectations. Do not we ſtand on the Brink of the Grave? and muſt not the Object, of which they are ſo much enamour'd, be loſt and buried with us? As it would not ceaſe to be criminal in us to propagate a Falſity, tho' *we* might recommend it with Eloquence, and *others* embrace it with Pleaſure; ſo are we in the like Degree blameable, if we labour to charm Mens Affections, and to draw them into an undue Confidence and Reliance. We ought to caution Perſons, whom we find diſpoſed to credit a Fiction; whatever Advantage we might reap by their Miſtake.

ſtake. In the ſame Manner ought we to warn thoſe who are courting our Favour, againſt engaging themſelves in ſo vain a Patronage and Protection. Becauſe their whole Life ought really to be ſpent either in ſeeking GOD, or in ſtudying to pleaſe Him.

* To truſt in Forms and Ceremonies, is Superſtition; but not to comply with them is Pride.

* ALL other Sects and Religions in the World are left to the Guidance of meer natural Reaſon. *Chriſtians* alone are obliged not to take their Rules of acting from themſelves, but to gain the Knowledge of thoſe which were deliver'd by *JESUS CHRIST*, to His Church, to be tranſmitted to them. There are certain Perſons who are aggriev'd at this Reſtraint. They deſire to have the Liberty of following their own Imaginations, like the reſt of the World. 'Tis in vain that we cry to them, as the Prophets to the antient *Jews*, "Enter into "the Congregation, inform your ſelves of "the Laws of your Fathers, and follow "their Steps." They are ready to anſwer us, as the ſame *Jews*, *We will not go; but we will certainly do according to the Thoughts of our own Heart, like the Nations round about us.*

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* THERE are three Means of believing; by Inſpiration, by Reaſon, and by Cuſtom. Chriſtianity, which is the only rational Inſtitution, does yet admit none for its Sons who do not believe by Inſpiration. Nor does it injure Reaſon or Cuſtom, or debar them of their proper Force: on the contrary, it directs us to open our Mind by the Proofs of the former, and to confirm our Mind by the Authority of the latter. But then, it chiefly engages us, to offer our ſelves, with all Humility, to the Succours of inſpired Grace, which alone can produce the true and ſalutary Effect: *Ne evacuatur crux Chriſti.*

* A Man never does Evil with ſo much Complacency, ſo full Purpoſe and Reſolution, as when he does it upon a miſtaken Principle of Conſcience.

* THE *Jews*, who were call'd to ſubdue Nations and Princes, were themſelves the Captives and Slaves of Sin. *Chriſtians*, whoſe Vocation was, to be Servants and Subjects, are, in the Event, the only Freemen, and the only Sons.

* SHALL we call it Courage in a Dying Man, that he dares under his Weakneſs and Agony, affront an Omnipotent and Eternal GOD?

* I would never diſpute the Credit of a Hiſtory, after the Author had ſealed it with his own Blood.

* THERE

*THERE is a Virtuous Fear, which is the Effect of Faith; and there is a Vitious Fear, which is the Product of Doubt. The former leads to Hope; as relying on GOD, in whom we believe: the latter inclines to Deſpair, as not relying on GOD, in whom we do not believe. Perſons of the one Character fear to loſe GOD: Perſons of the other Character fear to find Him.

**SOLOMON* and *Job* judg'd the beſt and ſpake the trueſt of Human Miſery; the former the moſt happy, the latter the moſt unfortunate of Mankind: the one acquainted by long Experience with the Vanity of Pleaſure, the other with the Reality of Affliction and Pain.

*GOD does not exact from us that we ſhould blindly ſubmit our Faith to Him without all Reaſon, nor intends to awe and controul us by mere Force. Yet He thinks not Himſelf obliged to render us a Reaſon of all Things. And to reconcile theſe ſeeming Contrarieties, He is pleas'd clearly to diſcover to us the Divine Marks of His own Nature, and to procure Himſelf Authority by ſuch Wonders and Evidences, as we are not able to reſiſt: after which He requires that we ſhould, in all other Caſes, believe without Delay, whatever He propoſes to us as true, when we find no other Reaſon to reject it, but becauſe we are, of our ſelves, unable

unable to diſcern whether it be true or no.

* THE whole World may be divided into theſe three Ranks and Orders of Men; thoſe who, having found GOD, reſign themſelves up to His Service; thoſe who, having not yet found Him, do indefatigably ſearch after Him; and laſtly, thoſe who have neither found Him, nor are inclined to ſeek Him. The firſt are Happy and Wiſe: the Third are Unhappy and Fools: the Second muſt be own'd to be Wiſe, as they own themſelves to be Unhappy.

* REASON proceeds ſo ſlowly, and upon ſo many Maxims and Views, which it muſt always keep preſent before it, that, every Moment, it either ſtumbles or goes aſtray, for want of ſeeing all Things at once. The Caſe is quite otherwiſe with Senſe. This, as it acts in an Inſtant, ſo it is always prepared for Action. When our Reaſon, therefore, has brought us acquainted with the Truth, we ſhould endeavour to imprint our Faith on the inward Senſe of our Heart, without which it will be ever wavering and uncertain.

IT belongs equally to the Perfection of Almighty GOD, that He be infinitely juſt, and infinitely merciful. Yet His Juſtice and Severity towards the Wicked, is ſtill leſs amazing, than His Mercy and Goodneſs towards the Elect.

XXIX.

Moral Thoughts.

KNOWLEDGE has two Extremities, which meet and touch each other. The firſt of them is pure Natural Ignorance, ſuch as attends every Man at his Birth. The other is the Perfection attain'd by great Souls, who having run through the Circle of All that Mankind can know, find at length that they know nothing, and are contented to return to that Ignorance from which they ſet out. Ignorance that thus knows it ſelf, is a wiſe and learned Ignorance. Thoſe Perſons who lie between theſe Extremities, who have got beyond natural Ignorance, but cannot arrive at that Ignorance which is the effect of Wiſdom, have a tincture of Science which ſwells them with Vanity and Sufficiency. Theſe are the Men that trouble the World, and that make the falſeſt Judgments of all Things in it. The Vulgar, and the truly Knowing, compoſe the ordinary Train of Men: thoſe of the middle Character deſpiſe All, and, in return, are deſpiſed by All.

* THE

* THE Multitude have a profeſs'd Veneration for Perſons of Birth and Quality. The Half-learned as profeſſedly contemn them; alledging that the Advantage of a noble Birth is the Merit of Fortune, and not of the Man. The truly Learned, reſpect and honour them; not upon the Motives of the Vulgar, but upon a higher View. Perſons of much Zeal and little Knowledge do again deſpiſe them; as judging, not by either of theſe Conſiderations, but by the Maxims of Religion. But Men of an advanced and finiſh'd Piety, are ſtill wont to treat them with Eſteem and Reverence, upon a ſuperior Principle, and a larger Degree of Illumination. Thus there is a Succeſſion of Opinions, for, or againſt, according to the different Meaſures and Proportions of Knowledge and Light.

* THE Soul loves the Hand: and the Hand, if endued with Will and Choice, ought to love it ſelf in the ſame Proportion in which it is loved by the Soul. All Love beyond this Standard, would be partial and unjuſt.

* *Qui adhæret Domino unus Spiritus eſt.* A *Chriſtian* loves himſelf as a Member of that Body of which *JESUS CHRIST* is the Head: and he loves *JESUS CHRIST*, as the Head of that Body of which he is himſelf a Member. Both theſe Motions

Motions center and conſpire in the ſame Affection. If the Feet or the Hands were endued with a ſeparate Will, they could never preſerve their natural Order and Employment, otherwiſe than by ſubmitting this private Will to that general and ſuperior Will, which has the Government of the whole Body. Without ſuch a Reſignation they would have a Liberty only of Confuſion and Ruin: whereas in ſerving the Good of the Body, they moſt effectually conſult their own.

* CONCUPISCENCE and Violence are the Sources of all our Actions, merely Human. From the Former ariſe thoſe which are voluntary; and thoſe which are involuntary from the latter.

* WHENCE comes it to paſs, that we have ſo much Patience with thoſe who are maim'd in Body, and ſo little with thoſe who are defective in Mind? It is, becauſe the Cripple acknowledges that *we* have the Uſe of our Legs; whereas the Fool obſtinately maintains that *we* are the Perſons who halt in Underſtanding. Without this Difference in the Caſe, neither Object would move our Reſentment, but both our Compaſſion.

EPICTETUS propoſes a Queſtion of the like Nature: why we ſhould not be touch'd when a Man tells us, without any ground,

ground, that we have the Head-Ach, and yet ſhould fly into a Paſſion when we are tax'd (perhaps falſly) with uſing a weak Argument, or making a wrong Choice. Now the Reaſon is certainly this: becauſe we are well aſſured that we have not the Head-ach (or are not lame;) but we are by no means ſo well aſſured of the Rectitude of our Judgment or Will. For having, in the latter Caſe, no Evidence but that we behold the Thing before us, with our whole Light, when another, with as full a Light, ſees the direct contrary, this ſtartles and confounds us: eſpecially when we hear the Generality of Men exploding our Miſtake; for then we muſt prefer our own Parts to thoſe of ſo many Thouſands, who join in the Cenſure; which is a Point not to be compaſs'd without the utmoſt Difficulty and Reluctance. But Men can never thus contradict each other, in the Reports of their outward Senſes.

* THE Vulgar have many good Notions; as for Inſtance, that Hunting and Diverſion are preferable to the Study of Poetry. This the Half-learned expoſe as ridiculous, and triumph over the Vulgar, upon the Occaſion. Yet in regard to ſome other Notions, as that 'tis neceſſary Men ſhould be diſtinguiſh'd by external Circumſtances, as Birth, Fortune, and the like, the

Vulgar, and theſe Pretenders to Learning, concur in their Cenſure. Becauſe this Diſtinction, for Inſtance, tho' founded upon good Reaſon, yet is not founded upon Reaſons which they are capable of penetrating; and therefore is condemn'd as unjuſt, while conſiſtent with the moſt perfect Juſtice.

* 'TIS a great Advantage of Quality, that a Man at Eighteen, or Twenty, ſhall be allow'd the ſame Eſteem and Deference, which another purchaſeth by his Merit at Fifty. Here are thirty Years gain'd at a Stroke.

* THERE are a ſort of Men, who, to demonſtrate the great Injuſtice of our Diſregard, never fail to urge Precedents of ſuch and ſuch great Perſons, who prize them after an extraordinary Manner. The Anſwer I would give to this Argument, is; do but produce the Merit which gain'd you the Eſteem of theſe Admirers, and I am ready to add my ſelf to the Number.

* THE Deſigns which we have moſt at Heart are very often groundleſs and impertinent. As for Inſtance, our concealing the Narrowneſs of our Fortune. This Policy is a mere Nothing, which our Imagination ſwells to a Mountain. Another turn of Imagination would make us as free to diſcover our Circumſtances, as we are now induſtrious to diſguize them.

* THERE

* THERE are ſome Vices which are Retainers to us, not immediately, but by the Intervention of others; and which, like Branches, fall of Courſe, upon our removing the Trunk.

* REASON, when 'tis on the ſide of Illnature, diſplays all its Force and Compaſs, and gains a Luſtre from the Pride and Fierceneſs of the Paſſion. Auſterity of Life and Manners, when it has proved unſucceſsful in the Search of true Good, and lets us looſe again to follow Nature, grows violent, upon changing to the Extreme.

* To be capable of receiving Pleaſure only from Sport, is but a mean Pretenſion to Happineſs: Becauſe all Satisfaction of this kind is external and foreign, and conſequently dependent; and therefore liable to be diſturb'd by a thouſand Accidents, which are the Sources of inevitable Trouble.

* THE World is full of good Maxims; all the Fault lies in the Application. For Example, that a Man ought to expoſe his Life for the Sake of the Publick, is an univerſal and undoubted Principle: and, we ſee, all are ready to practiſe it in the Cauſe of their Country; but few in the Cauſe of their Religion.

* A Man does not paſs in the World to

have any Knowledge of Poesy, or of the Mathematics, unless he puts out the Sign of a Poet, or of a Mathematician. But Persons of true Sense and Judgment are never for posting up their Perfections; nor will they allow any Difference between the Trade of a Poet, and that of an Embroiderer. They desire not the Title of Professors, but will, upon Occasion, discovet the Ability of Judges. You must not presume to guess at their Talent. They are not for leading the Discourse, but are prepared to fall in with every Subject of the Company. You can never discern in them any one Endowment rather than another, but by the Necessity of using it; and 'tis equally their Character, that you would not esteem them fine Speakers, while it was improper to play the Orator, and yet would allow them all the Praises of Eloquence, when Eloquence was in Season. 'Tis therefore a false Commendation to extol a Man at his first Entrance into Company, as excellent in the Art of Verse: And it's a bad Token, as well as a poor Complement, never to apply to him, but when the Debate is about some certain Lines in a Poet. We are made up of Wants, and love those only who can fill them. *Such an One is an admirable Mathematician*, they cry: But my Business is not

to

to be done by Diagrams. *Such an One is Maſter of the Art of War:* But I am reſolved to keep the Peace with my Neighbours. The Man we wiſh for, muſt be one of a general Character, of ſound Prudence, and ſincere Probity, who can accommodate himſelf to all our Neceſſities, and aſſiſt us in every Affair of Life.

* WHILE we continue in good Health, we can by no means apprehend how we ſhould be able to bear the Severity of a Diſtemper. Yet when we are ſick, we chearfully take whatever is preſcribed, and grow reſolute upon our Misfortune. We then no longer covet theſe Opportunities of Walking and Diverſion, which we enjoy'd in Health, but which are incompatible with the Neceſſities of our Diſeaſe. Nature ever ſupplies us with a new Set of Paſſions and Deſires agreeable to our preſent Eſtate. It is not our Nature therefore, but our vain Fear, which troubles us, by joining to the Condition in which we are, the Paſſions of that Condition in which we are not.

* DISCOURSES of Humility afford Matter of Preſumption to the Proud, no leſs than of Submiſſion to the Meek. A Dogmatiſt ſhall conclude poſitively from the Reaſonings of a Sceptic. Few Perſons who talk of any Virtue, or Quality, are inwardly acquainted and affected with it. We are full of Dou-

When I afterwards applied my ſelf to ſtudy *Man*, I diſcover'd that thoſe abſtracted Sciences are by no means the proper Entertainments of his Nature, and that I had ſtray'd farther from my proper Condition, by ſounding their Depths, than others by remaining ignorant of them, whoſe Neglect I could therefore eaſily forgive. I hoped at leaſt to find more Companions in my new Enquiry; becauſe this was the proper Employment and Exerciſe of Mankind. But I was again diſappointed, and found, on the whole matter, that thoſe few who ſtudy Geometry, are ſtill more than thoſe who ſtudy themſelves.

* WHEN All moves equally, nothing ſeems to move, as in a Veſſel under ſail. When All run by Conſent into Vice, none appears to do ſo. He that ſtops firſt, views, as from a fix'd Point, the Extravagance which tranſports the reſt.

* IF we would reprove with Succeſs, and effectually ſhew another that he's in the wrong, we ought to obſerve which way he looks on the Object, (becauſe, that way, 'tis generally ſuch as he apprehends it) and to acknowledge that he is ſo far in the right. He will be ſatisfied with this Method, as intimating that he was not miſtaken, but only wanted to have ſurvey'd the thing on all ſides. The former Imputation is apt to

work

work on our Shame and Reſentment; but the latter gives us no Diſturbance. The Reaſon of which, poſſibly may be, that the Underſtanding, as well as the Senſe, can never be deceiv'd in that part of a Thing which it actually has under its View.

* A Man's Virtue is not to be meaſur'd by ſome extraordinary Efforts and Sallies, but by a conſtant and uniform Series of Action.

* THE great ones and the little ones of the World have all the ſame Accidents, the ſame Paſſions and Follies. But as the former are at the top of the Wheel, ſo the latter are nearer its Center, and therefore leſs agitated by the common Motion and Revolution.

* WE are for the moſt part more eaſily perſwaded by Reaſons of our own finding out, than by any which owe their Original to the Wit of others.

* THO' a Man ſhould have no Intereſt to ſerve in what he reports, yet we muſt not abſolutely, and in all Caſes, conclude hence that he ſpeaks the Truth; becauſe there are ſome who lie for lying's ſake.

* THE Example of *Alexander*'s Continence has not made ſo many Converts to Chaſtity, as that of his Drunkenneſs has to Intemperance. Men apprehend no Shame in being leſs perfect than he, and judge it very

excuſable to be more defective. We are apt to think our ſelves much above the Corruptions of the Vulgar, when we fall into the Vices of theſe great and renown'd Perſons; not conſidering that their Vices do really bring them down to the vulgar Level. We are proud of joining our ſelves to them, by the ſame common Term which joins them to the Multitude. How lofty ſoever their Condition may be, there is ſome hold or other about them, by which they are link'd to the reſt of Mankind. They don't hang in the Air, or ſubſiſt abſolutely ſeparate from humane Society. If they are above us, 'tis becauſe their Head is higher; their Feet are always as low as ours. They all touch the ſame Line, and tread the ſame Ground; and in this Reſpect are not ſuperior to us, nor to Children, nor even to Beaſts.

* 'Tis the Combat that pleaſeth us, and not the Victory. We love to ſee Beaſts fighting; but not the Conqueror feeding on the Vanquiſh'd. The only thing we wiſh, is to behold the Iſſue of the Day; and when that once appears, we are ſatisfied with the Proſpect.

'Tis thus in our Diverſions; and 'tis thus in our Reſearches of Knowledge. We are amuſed with the contending Opinions, but very little gratified with the deciſive Truth. For Truth it ſelf ceaſeth to be agreeable,

unleſs

unleſs it ſpring from the midſt of Contention. The Caſe is the ſame with our Paſſions; the Struggle of any two amongſt them entertains us with Delight; but the Maſtery of either turns into Savageneſs. We don't ſeek the things themſelves, (in reſpect of any Objects whatſoever) but we ſeek the Change and Variety that is to be met with in purſuing them. This Reaſon diſcovers it ſelf on the Stage; where we alike condemn a continued Scene of Eaſe and Softneſs without Terror; of extream Miſery, without Hope; or, of Brutal Love, without Decency and Humanity.

* WE don't teach Men to be honeſt, while we teach them All beſides; and yet they pretend to this more than to All. Thus they chiefly value themſelves upon knowing that, which is the only thing they never learnt.

* WHAT a ſenſeleſs Project it was in *Montaign* to give ſuch a Picture of himſelf; and that, not by Chance, and againſt his ordinary Maxims, (as all Men have their Failings) but upon profeſs'd Principles, and with his main Intention! For, to ſay fooliſh things thro' Accident, or Weakneſs, is a common Misfortune; but to ſay them with full Deſign, eſpecially thoſe of ſo very groſs a Character, is inſupportably abſurd.

* MEN of irregular Lives are wont to boaſt, that they exactly follow Nature, and

that

that thoſe who walk by Rule and Order are the Perſons who really deviate from her: As Men in a Ship fancy thoſe to move who ſtand on the ſhore. Both Sides affirm the very ſame of each other; and we muſt be placed at ſome one preciſe Point, e'er we can judge between them. The Diſtance of the Veſſel from the Haven is a clear Deciſion of the latter Controverſy; but who can ever find the like Mark to determine the former?

* To lament the Caſe of the unfortunate, is by no means a Check upon our natural Concupiſcence; which may ſtill reign with full Power, tho' it gives us Leave to ſhew this Expreſſion of Humanity, and to acquire the Reputation of Pity and Tenderneſs. Whence we are to infer, that ſuch a Reputation can be of no conſiderable Value.

* WOULD any have thought, that a Man who enjoy'd the Friendſhip of the Kings of *England* and *Poland*, and the Queen of *Sweden*, ſhould at length have wanted a ſafe Retreat, a Shelter and *Aſylum* in the World?

* As Objects have different Qualities, ſo has the Soul different Inclinations. Nothing preſents it ſelf with the ſame conſtant Face to the Affections; and the Affections apply themſelves to nothing after the ſame conſtant manner. Hence it comes to paſs, that the ſame thing which excites our Laughter, may, upon the very next View, provoke our Tears.

* WE

* WE are of ſo unhappy a Frame, that we can take Pleaſure in no Enjoyment, but upon Condition of being as much diſpleas'd, if any thing chance to render it leſs ſucceſsful to us, as a thouſand Accidents may and do every Hour. He that has found out the Secret of delighting himſelf in Good, without diſturbing himſelf with the Fear of the oppoſite Evil, ſeems to have hit on the Point of true Happineſs.

* THERE are different Claſſes and Orders of Men; as the Valiant, the Sparkiſh, the Witty, and the Pious; who ought reſpectively to keep within their own Sphere, and not to invade that of their Neighbours. Yet how often do we find them at Variance, and ſee the Soldier and the Beau idly banging one another for the Maſtery? whereas they really belong to a different Empire. Their Fault is, that they don't underſtand themſelves, and therefore ſet up for univerſal Dominion. But nothing can obtain ſuch a Dominion; not even Force itſelf; which, while it tyrannizeth over external Actions, has not the leaſt Command over the Realms of Learning and Wit.

* *FEROX gens nullam eſſe vitam niſi in armis putat.* Theſe Men would have choſen Death rather than Peace: There are others who would chooſe Death rather than War. Any Opinion which has taken ſo deep,

deep, and ſo natural, a Root, gains an eaſy Preference to Life it ſelf.

* How difficult is it for me, to propoſe any Matter to the Judgment of another, without corrupting his Judgment by my manner of propoſing it? I cannot intimate that it is eaſy and agreeable, or that it is difficult and obſcure, but I ſhall, very probably, impoſe either a favourable, or ſiniſter Biaſs on the Conceptions of my Friend. I ought to give no ſuch Intimation of my own Sentiments. For then he'll pronounce of the Thing as it really is, according as its preſent Condition, and thoſe Circumſtances, which are not of my adding, ſhall repreſent it. And yet perhaps my very Silence, in this Caſe, may have the ſame ill Effect: according to the Turn and Conſtruction which my Friend ſhall be in the Humour to give it; or, according to what he may gather from my Air and Look, or from the Tone of my Voice in propoſing the Queſtion. So eaſy is it to juſtle Reaſon out of its natural Seat; or, rather, ſo infirm and tottering a Seat has Nature given it.

* THE *Platoniſts*, and even the *Stoics*, while they believed that GOD alone was an Object ſo worthy as to juſtify our Love, did yet deſire themſelves to be beloved and admired by Men. They had no manner of Senſe of their natural Corruption. Had they been really

really diſpoſed to the Love and Adoration of GOD, and felt the moſt raviſhing Joy from ſo Divine an Exercife, they might fairly have call'd themſelves as Good and Great as they had pleas'd. But if they found their Hearts under an utter Averſion and Repugnancy to theſe Duties; if they had no manner of Inclination but to eſtabliſh themſelves in the Opinion of Men; and if their whole Perfection conſiſted in being able without Force, to make others propoſe a Happineſs in loving and eſteeming them; ſuch a Perfection ought to be abhorred. For this was their Caſe: they poſſeſs'd, in ſome Degree, the Knowledge of GOD, and yet courted only the Love of Men. They were deſirous that Men ſhould place their Hope and Confidence in them, and ſhould make them the ſole Objects of their Choice and Delight.

* How wiſely has it been ordain'd, to diſtinguiſh Men rather by the Exterior Shew, than by the Interior Endowments! Here's another Perſon and I diſputing the Way. Who ſhall have the Preference in this Caſe? Why, the better Man of the two. But I am as good a Man as he: ſo that if no Expedient be found, he muſt beat me, or I muſt beat him. Well, but all this while, he has four Footmen at his Back, and I have but one. This is a viſible Advantage: we need on-

ly tell Noſes, to diſcover it. 'Tis my Part therefore to yield, and I am a Blockhead if I conteſt the Point. See here an eaſy Method of Peace, the great Safeguard and Supreme Happineſs of this World!

* TIME puts the ſureſt End to Troubles and Complaints. Becauſe the World continually changeth, and Perſons and Things become indifferent. Neither the Aggriever, nor the Party aggriev'd, are long in the ſame Circumſtances. 'Tis as if we ſhould have perſonally affronted and exaſperated thoſe of a certain Nation, and ſhould be able to viſit that Nation again, two Generations hence. We ſhould find the ſame *French*, (for Inſtance) but not the ſame *Men*.

* 'Tis infallibly certain, that the Soul is either Mortal, or Immortal. This ought to make an intire Change in Morality. And yet ſo fatal was the Blindneſs of the Philoſophers, that they framed their whole moral Syſtem, without the leaſt Dependence on ſuch an Enquiry.

* THE laſt Act of Life is always Bloody and Tragical; how pleaſantly ſoever the Comedy may have run thro' all the reſt. A little Earth, caſt upon our cold Head, for ever determines our Hopes, and our Condition.

XXX.

XXX.

Thoughts upon Death: Being an Extract from a Letter of M. Paſcal's, *occaſion'd by the Death of his Father.*

WHEN we are under Affliction and Trouble, for the Death of a Perſon who was dear to us, or for any Misfortune which we are capable of ſuffering, we ought not to ſeek our Conſolation in our ſelves, or in others, or in any Part of the Creation, but in GOD alone. And the Reaſon ſeems to be evident: in as much as no created Being is the firſt Cauſe and Mover of thoſe Accidents which the World calls Evil. Since, therefore, they are all to be referred to GOD as their real Author, and ſovereign Diſpoſer, 'tis viſibly our Duty, to repair to this original Source, and to expect thence the only Methods of ſolid Comfort. If we obſerve theſe Directions; if we look on the Death, for Inſtance, which we are lamenting, not as the Effect of mere Chance, nor as a fatal Neceſſity of Nature, nor as the Sport of thoſe Elements and Particles which conſtitute our Frame, (for GOD ne-

ver abandons his Servants to ſo capricious Events) but as the indiſpenſable and inevitable, the moſt holy, and moſt juſt, Effect of a providential Decree, now executed in its Time; if we conſider that whatever has now happen'd, was from everlaſting preſent to GOD, and pre-ordain'd by His Wiſdom: If, I ſay, by a noble Tranſport of divine Grace, we ſurvey the Accident which is before us, not in it ſelf, and abſtractedly from its Author, but out of it ſelf, and in its ſupreme Author's Will, as its true Cauſe, with reſpect both to the Matter and the Manner; we ſhall adore in humble Silence, His unſearchable Judgments, His impenetrable Secrets; we ſhall reverence the Holineſs of His Decrees, we ſhall bleſs the Guidance of His Providence; and uniting our Will to the Will of GOD Himſelf, we ſhall chooſe with Him, in Him, and for Him, the very ſame Events which He, in us, and for us, has choſen from all Eternity.

* THERE can be no Comfort, but in Truth. 'Tis moſt certain, that *Socrates* and *Seneca* have nothing which may perſwade, and convince, may eaſe and relieve us, on theſe Occaſions. They were both under the original Error which blindeth Mankind. They look'd on Death as really Natural to us: and all the Diſcourſes which they have built on this falſe Foundation,

have

have ſo much Vanity, and ſo little Solidity, as to ſerve for no other Uſe, but to demonſtrate the general Weakneſs of human Race, ſince the moſt elevated Productions of the Wiſeſt amongſt Men, are evidently ſo childiſh and contemptible.

IT is not ſo that we learn *JESUS CHRIST*; it is not thus that we read the canonical Books of Scripture. 'Tis here alone that we ſucceed in our Search of Truth: and Truth is no leſs infallibly join'd to Comfort, than it is infallibly ſeparated from Error. Let us then take a View of Death, by thoſe Lights which the Holy Spirit has given us. And by thoſe we have the Advantage of diſcovering, that Death is no other than a Puniſhment, impoſed on Man, to expiate the Guilt, and neceſſary to Man to diſſolve the Power of his Sins: that 'tis this alone which can deliver the Mind from the Concupiſcence of the Fleſh, ſome Degree of which does ever adhere to good Men, in this World. We are hence inſtructed, that *JESUS CHRIST* came into the World as a Victim and Propitiation, and as ſuch offer'd Himſelf to GOD; that His Birth, His Life, His Death, His Reſurrection, His Aſcenſion, His Seſſion at the Right Hand of the Father, and His Preſence in the Holy Euchariſt, all belong to one and the ſame Sacrifice: To conclude,

we are informed, that what was accompliſh'd in *JESUS CHRIST*, muſt be accompliſh'd alſo in His Members.

LET us then conſider Life as a Sacrifice; and let the Accidents of Life make no other Impreſſions on us, than as, in Proportion, the Accompliſhment of this Sacrifice is either interrupted or promoted by them. Let us ſtyle nothing ill but what turns the Sacrifice of GOD into the Sacrifice of the Devil; and let us honour all ſuch Things with the Name of Good, as render that which was a Sacrifice to the Devil in *Adam*, a Sacrifice to GOD in *JESUS CHRIST*. Let us examine the Notion of Death by this Rule and Principle.

IN order to which Deſign, it is neceſſary to have recourſe to the Perſon of *JESUS CHRIST*: For as GOD regards not Men but through Him as a Mediator; ſo neither ought we to regard our ſelves, or others, but with Reſpect to the ſame Mediation.

IF we look not through this Medium, we ſhall diſcern nothing but either real Pains, or deteſtable Pleaſures: but if we ſee all Things, as in *JESUS CHRIST*, all will conſpire for our Conſolation, Satisfaction, and Edification.

LET us reflect on Death as in *JESUS CHRIST*, not as without *JESUS CHRIST*. Without *JESUS CHRIST*, it

it is dreadful, it is deteſtable, it is the Terror of Nature. In *JESUS CHRIST*, it is fair and amiable, it is good and holy, it is the Joy of the Saints. All Events being render'd ſweet in *JESUS CHRIST*, Death it ſelf has a Share in the Influence. To ſanctify Death and Sufferings to us, was the Reaſon for which he ſuffer'd and dy'd; who, as he was GOD and Man in one Perſon, comprized, at once, whatever was great and illuſtrious, whatever was humble and obſcure; that he might ſanctify all things in himſelf, Sin only excepted, and might be the ſtanding Model of all Characters and Conditions.

WOULD we know what Death is, what it is in *JESUS CHRIST*, we muſt examine the Regard which it bears to his continual, uninterrupted Sacrifice. And we may obſerve, that in Sacrifices the principal Part is the Death of the Victim. The Oblation and Sanctification, which precede, are indeed the Diſpoſitions, but Death is ſtill the Completion; in which, by renouncing its very Life and Being, the Creature pays to GOD the utmoſt Homage of which it is capable; thus humbling, and as it were, annihilating it ſelf, before the Eyes of his Majeſty, and adoring his ſupreme Exiſtence, who alone eſſentially exiſts. There was indeed another part to be perform'd after the

Death of the Sacrifice, without which it was vain and ineffectual, namely, the Acceptance of it by GOD. This is meant by the Scripture Expreſſion, *odoratus eſt Deus odorem ſuavitatis.* But this, tho' it crown'd the Sacrifice, was rather an Action of GOD towards the Creature, than of the Creature towards GOD; and did not hinder, but that the laſt Act of the Creature was ſtill determined by its Death.

WE find each of theſe Circumſtances fulfill'd in our LORD, upon his coming into the World. *Thro' the eternal Spirit,* He *offered himſelf up to God* (*a*). *When he cometh into the World, He ſaith, Sacrifice and Offerings Thou wouldſt not: Then ſaid I, Lo I come to do thy Will, O GOD. Thy Law is within my Heart* (*b*). We have here his Oblation, and his Sanctification immediately follow'd. His Sacrifice continu'd thro' his Life, and was finiſh'd by his Death. It was needful for Him *to ſuffer theſe things, and to enter into his Glory* (*c*). *Tho' he was a Son, yet learnt he Obedience by the things which he ſuffer'd* (*d*). *In the Days of his Fleſh, when he had offer'd up Prayers and Supplications, with ſtrong Crying and Tears unto Him that was able to ſave him*

(*a*) Heb. ix. 14. x. 5, 7.
(*b*) Pſal. xl.
(*c*) Luke xxiv. 26.
(*d*) Heb. v. 8.

from

from Death, he was heard in that he feared (*e*). Finally, GOD rais'd him again by his Glorious Power, (of which the Fire which fell from Heaven on the Sacrifices, was a Type) to burn and consume, as it were, his mortal Body, and to exalt and restore him to a Life of Glory.

THE Sacrifice of *JESUS CHRIST* being thus perfected, as to the Action, by his Death, and, as to the Subject, by his Resurrection, (when the *Image* of the Body of Sin was absorb'd in Glory) he had perform'd all that was on his Part; and there remain'd nothing, but that the Sacrifice should be accepted of God; and that, as Incense, it should ascend, and carry up its Odour to the Throne of the Divine Majesty. In pursuance of which, our LORD was perfectly offer'd, lifted up and receiv'd at GOD's Throne, at his Ascension; which he effected partly by his own proper Force, and partly by the Assistance of the Holy Spirit, with which he was every way encompass'd and repleniſh'd. He was carried up as the Odour of the Sacrifices by the Air which supported it; the former of which prefigur'd himself, and the latter represented the Holy Spirit. And the *Acts of the Apostles* expressly re-

(*e*) Heb. v. 7.

port, that he was receiv'd into Heaven, to give us an Aſſurance, that this Holy Sacrifice, accompliſh'd on Earth, was receiv'd and accepted *in the Boſom of the Father*.

LET us then not be ſorry as Gentiles without Hope, for our departed *Chriſtian* Friends. Our Loſs of them is not to be dated from the Hour of their Death. To ſpeak properly, we then loſt them, when they were admitted into the Church by Baptiſm. Ever ſince that Admiſſion, they were not *ours*, but GOD's; their Life was devoted and conſecrated to GOD; their Actions bore no Regard to the things of this World, but for the Sake of GOD. By their Death they are at length entirely diſengaged from Sin; and 'tis at this Moment, that they are accepted by GOD, and that their Sacrifice receives its Accompliſhment and Crown.

THEY have now perform'd what they vow'd; they have finiſh'd the Work which God gave them to do; they have diſcharg'd that which was the only End of their Creation. The Will of God is perfected in them; and their Will is ſwallow'd up in the Divine. What therefore God has join'd together let not us put aſunder; but, by a right Underſtanding, and true Judgment, let us ſuppreſs, or at leaſt moderate the Sentiments of corrupt and miſtaken Nature, which exhibits nothing but falſe Images, and whoſe

Illuſions diſturb the Sanctity of thoſe Thoughts, which from the Inſtruction of *Chriſtian* Truth we ought to have derived.

LET us form our Ideas of humane Diſſolution, not on the Pagan, but on the *Chriſtian* Model; that is, let them, as St. *Paul* enjoins, be built on Hope, the eſpecial Gift and Privilege of *Chriſtians*. Let us look on the Remains of a deceas'd Friend, not as a noiſom and infectious Carcaſs, according to the fallacious Pourtraict of Nature; but, according to the Aſſurance of Faith, as the eternal and inviolable Temple of the Holy Ghoſt.

FOR we know that the Bodies of the Faithful are inhabited by the Spirit of God, 'till the Reſurrection, which ſhall be perform'd by the Power of the ſame Spirit, reſiding in them for that Deſign. This is the Senſe of the ancient Fathers. And 'tis for this Reaſon that we pay Honour even to the Relicks of the Saints. Nor was it on any other Principle, that the earlier *Chriſtians* were wont to put the Holy Euchariſt into the Mouths of the Deceas'd; becauſe knowing them ſtill to be the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, they thought them to be ſtill worthy of an Union with this Holy Sacrament. But the Church has ſince alter'd the Cuſtom; not becauſe ſhe denies the Bodies of good Men to be pure and ſacred, but becauſe

cauſe ſhe judges that the Euchariſt, which is the Bread of Life, and of the Living, ought not to be imparted to the Dead.

LET us not conſider the Faithful, who are departed in the Grace of God, as having ceas'd to live; which is the falſe Suggeſtion of Nature; but as now beginning to live, which is the infallible Teſtimony of Truth. Let us look on their Souls not as annihilated and loſt, but as quicken'd and enliven'd, and united to the Sovereign Life. And, by attending to theſe ſound Doctrines, let us correct the Prejudices of Error, which are ſo firmly rooted in our Mind, and the Apprehenſions of Fear, which are ſo ſtrongly imprinted on our Senſe.

* GOD created Man under a double Paſſion; one for his Creator, the other for himſelf; but on this Condition, that the Love of his Creator ſhould be infinite, that is, ſhould have no other End but GOD; and that the Love of himſelf ſhould be finite, with a conſtant Regard and Reſerve to his Creator.

MAN, in this Eſtate, not only loved himſelf without Sin; but had ſinn'd, could he poſſibly have ceas'd to love himſelf.

BY the Entrance of Sin into the World, Man was deprived of the former of theſe Affections; and his Soul, which was ſtill great, and ſtill capable even of an infinite Paſſion, retain-

retaining only the latter, this immediately diffuſed it ſelf, and over-flow'd all the mighty Space which had been evacuated by the Love of God. And thus we came to love only our ſelves, and to love our ſelves infinitely, that is, to love all things with reſpect only to our ſelves.

BEHOLD the Origine of Self-love! It was natural to *Adam*: It was, during his Innocence, regular and juſt; but became immoderate and criminal, upon his Fall.

BEHOLD the genuine Source of this Love, together with the unhappy Cauſe of its Vitiouſneſs and Exceſs!

THE ſame will hold true of our Deſire of Dominion, of our Averſion to Buſineſs, and of many the like natural Motions. And this whole Doctrine may be eaſily applied to our preſent Subject. The Fear of Death, to *Adam* in Innocence, was not only natural, but juſt; becauſe humane Life being then not diſagreeable to God, ought to have been agreeable to Man; and Death, for the ſame Reaſon, ought to have been an Object of Horror, as threatning to cut off a Life which was conformable to the Divine Will. But upon Man's Tranſgreſſion, his Life was debaſed and corrupted; his Soul and Body were ſet at Variance one with another, and both with God.

WHEN

WHEN this fatal Change had infected and impair'd the Holineſs of Life, the Love of Life continued ſtill; and, the Fear of Death remaining with no leſs Vigour, that which was juſt in *Adam*, was render'd unjuſt in us.

THIS is a true Account of the Fear of Death; whence it ſprung, and by what means it was tainted and vitiated.

LET us then clear up the Darkneſs and Error of Nature, by the Light of Faith. The Fear of Death was once good and commendable; but it was ſo only in Paradiſe, where could it have prevail'd, it muſt have deſtroy'd a Life altogether Holy and Virtuous. It was therefore juſt to hate it, while it could not arrive, without ſeparating a holy Soul from a holy Body; but it is no leſs juſt to love it, while it releaſeth a Soul which is righteous, from a Body which is impure. It was reaſonable to decline it, when it muſt have diſſolv'd the Peace and Agreement between Soul and Body; but by no means when it compoſes the Struggle and Contention, otherwiſe endleſs and irreconcilable. In a word, while it muſt have puniſh'd a guiltleſs Body, by taking away its Liberty of ſerving and honouring GOD; while it muſt have divided the Soul from a Body perfectly ſubject, and univerſally compliant, to its Will; while it muſt have put an End to all the Happineſs

which

which Man is capable of receiving; it might with Juſtice, ſo long, have been dreaded, and even abhorr'd. But now, when it ends a Life ever ſtain'd with ſome degrees of Impurity; when it takes away from the Body the Liberty of Sinning; when it reſcues and delivers the Soul from a powerful Rebel, which was continually oppoſing the Meaſures of its Safety and Bliſs, it would be highly injurious to maintain the ſame Opinion.

LET us not abandon the Love of Life, which attends our Nature; becauſe we received it from GOD. But then let us apply it to ſuch a Life only, as GOD gave it us for; and not to a quite different Object.

WHILE we admit and embrace that Love which *Adam* had for his Life of Innocence, and which even our *LORD JESUS CHRIST* retain'd for *His*; let us be reſolute in hating ſuch a Life as is contrary to that which was loved by *JESUS CHRIST*: And let us be concern'd at ſuch a Death only, as affected our *LORD* himſelf with ſome ſort of Apprehenſions, a Death happening to a Body pure and ſpotleſs in the Sight of GOD; but let us not fear a Death, which puniſhes a ſinful and purges an impure Body; and which therefore ought to inſpire us with quite oppoſite Sentiments, were we in any degree poſſeſs'd of thoſe noble Endowments, Faith, Hope, and Charity.

IT

IT is one of the moſt acknowledg'd Principles of *Chriſtianity*, that whatever happen'd to *JESUS CHRIST*, is likewiſe to be tranſacted in the Soul, and in the Body of every *Chriſtian*. So that as our *LORD* ſuffer'd in this Life of Infirmity and Mortality, as He was rais'd to a new Life, and at length carried up into the Heavens, where He now ſits at GOD's Right Hand; in the ſame Manner both the Soul and Body are to ſuffer and dye, *to* be rais'd again, and to aſcend into Heaven.

ALL theſe Particulars are accompliſh'd in the Soul during this Life, tho' not in the Body.

THE Soul ſuffers and dies to Sin, in Repentance and Baptiſm. The Soul is rais'd to a new Life in the Sacrament of the *LORD*'s Supper. The Soul relinquiſheth this Earth, and ſoars towards Heaven in leading a heavenly Life on Earth: which is St. *Paul*'s Meaning, when he ſays, *Converſatio noſtra in Cœlis eſt.*

THE like Changes are not accompliſh'd in the Body, during this preſent Life, but ſhall be accompliſh'd after it.

FOR, at our Deceaſe, the Body dies to this Mortal Life: at the Judgment, it ſhall riſe to a new Life: after the Judgment, it ſhall be exalted to Heaven, and there reſide for ever.

THE

Thus the very same Things happen to Soul and Body, though at different Periods: and the Revolutions of the Body do not take Place, till those of the Soul are compleated; that is, not till after Death. Insomuch that Death, which is the End and Crown of the Soul's Happiness, is but the first Beginning, or Prelude of Happiness to the Body.

BEHOLD the admirable Conduct of divine Wisdom in Man's Salvation! Upon which Subject St. *Austin* informs us, that GOD has been pleased to dispose Things in this Manner, lest, if the final Death and Resurrection of the human Body should be perform'd in Baptism, Men would yield themselves obedient to the Gospel on no other Motive, but the Love and Desire of Life. Whereas the Glory of Faith shines out in its chief Magnitude and Brightness, while we pursue and press towards Immortality, through the Vale and Shadow of Death.

* It is not reasonable that we should continue absolutely unmoved and unaffected at the Misfortunes and Evils which befal us; like Angels, who have no Sentiments or Inclinations of our Nature: nor is there more Reason that we should sorrow without Hope, like Heathens, who have no Feeling, no Apprehension of Grace. But

Reaſon and Juſtice allow, that we ſhould mourn like *Chriſtians*, and be comforted like *Chriſtians*; and that the Conſolations of Grace ſhould overcome the Affections of Nature: ſo that Grace may not only dwell in us, but may be victorious and triumphant in us: that by our thus hallowing the Name of our Father, His Will may become ours, His Grace may rule and reign over our Nature; that our Afflictions may be the Matter and Subject of a Sacrifice which His Grace will perfect in us, to His Glory: and that theſe particular Sacrifices may be ſo many Aſſurances of the entire and univerſal Sacrifice, in which our whole Nature ſhall be purified and perfected, by the Power of *JESUS CHRIST.*

THUS ſhall we make Advantage of our own Infirmities, while they furniſh Matter for this Whole-burnt-offering. And to profit by Failings and Imperfections is the great Aim of *Chriſtians*, who know that *all Things work together* for the Elect.

IF we obſerve theſe Things with a cloſer View, and as they really are in themſelves, we ſhall not fail to draw from them great Improvements of Edification. For it being moſt certain, that the Death of the Body is but the Type and Image of that of the Soul; if we have Reaſon to hope for the Salvation of our Friends while we la-

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ment their Deceaſe, though we may not be able to ſtop the Current of our Sadneſs and Diſpleaſure, yet we cannot but reap the Benefit of this Leſſon, that ſince bodily Death is ſo terrible as to create theſe Diſorders in us, the Death of the Soul is a Subject which ought to give us far more inconſolable Regret. GOD having been pleas'd to deliver to the firſt thoſe for whom we mourn, we may believe that He has graciouſly reſcued them from the ſecond. Let us contemplate the Greatneſs of our Happineſs, in the Greatneſs of our Miſery; and then even the Exceſſes of our Grief can be but the juſt Standard of our Joy.

ONE of the moſt ſolid and uſeful Charities towards the Dead, is to perform that which they would enjoin us were they ſtill in the World; and to put our ſelves, for their Sakes, into that Condition which they wiſh us in, at preſent.

BY this Means we ſhall make them, in ſome Sort, revive in our ſelves: while 'tis by their Counſels and Inſtructions that we live and act. And, as the Authors of Hereſies are puniſh'd in another Life, for the Sins to which they have moved their Followers, in whom their Poyſon ſtill operates after their Death; ſo good Men are recompens'd in a better State, not only for their own Virtues, but for the Virtues of

thoſe whom they have engaged by their Precepts, and influenced by their Examples.

* MAN is undoubtedly too weak to form a ſolid Judgment of Futurities. Let us truſt in GOD, and not fatigue our ſelves with indiſcreet and unwarrantable Apprehenſions. Let us depend on the Divine Aſſiſtance, for the Conduct and Iſſue of our Lives; and let us not yield our ſelves up to Diſconſolateneſs and Deſpair.

ST. *Auſtin* obſerves, that there is in every Man, a *Serpent*, an *Eve*, and an *Adam*. Our Senſes and natural Affections are the *Serpent*; our Concupiſcence is the *Eve*; and the *Adam* is our Reaſon.

NATURE continually tempts and allures us: Concupiſcence ever wiſheth and covets: but Sin is never finiſh'd, unleſs Reaſon authorize it by its Conſent.

LET us leave our *Serpent* and our *Eve*, to carry on our Solicitations; if we may not entirely expel them. But let us pray GOD ſo to fortify our *Adam* by His Grace, that we may yield our ſelves to be govern'd only by *JESUS CHRIST*, and that He may reign in us triumphantly for ever.

XXXI.

XXXI.

Miſcellaneous Thoughts.

THE greater Degree of Parts and Sagacity any one is Maſter of, the more *Originals* he will diſcern in the Characters of Mankind. Perſons of ordinary Endowments are utter Strangers to this Difference amongſt Men.

* A Man may have good Senſe, and yet not be able to apply it alike ſucceſsfully to all Subjects: for there are thoſe who judge exactly within one certain Order of Things; and yet are quite loſt and confounded in another. Some are excellent in drawing Conſequences from a few Principles; others from many. Some, for Inſtance, have an admirable Underſtanding of *Hydroſtatics*, where the Principles are few, but the Conſequences ſo fine and delicate, as not to be reached without the greateſt Penetration. And theſe Perſons would perhaps be no extraordinary Geometricians: becauſe the Principles of Geometry are vaſtly numerous; and becauſe a Genius may be ſo form'd, as with eaſe to ſearch a few Principles to the Bot-

tom, and yet not to comprehend Things with the ſame Accuracy, where the Principles are diffus'd to a larger Compaſs.

THERE are two Sorts of *Genius's* therefore; the one diſpoſed for a deep and vigorous Penetration into the Conſequences of Principles; and this is a Genius properly true and juſt; the other fit to comprehend a great Number of Principles without Confuſion; and this is the Genius for Geometry. The one conſiſts in the Force and Exactneſs, the other in the Extent and Capacity of Thought. Nor is this Diſtinction without Ground; becauſe a Genius may be vigorous, and yet contracted: or it may have, on the contrary, a great Reach, and little Strength.

THERE ſeems to be a wide Difference between a Genius for the Mathematics, and a Genius for Buſineſs, or Policy. In thoſe Sciences the Principles are groſs and palpable, yet ſo far removed from vulgar Uſe, that a Man is at a Loſs to turn his Head that Way, for want of Practice; but upon the leaſt Application he ſees them all at their Full, and muſt have a very untoward Judgment if he draws wrong Inferences from Principles which are too big to be overlooked, and too diſtinct to be confounded.

BUT in Buſineſs and Policy, the Principles are taken from daily Cuſtom, and from the

the Actions of the whole World. There is no need here of giving our Head a new ply, or of committing Violence on our ſelves. The only Point, is to have a good Diſcernment: But then it ought to be very good; becauſe theſe Principles are ſo numerous and ſo independent, that 'tis hardly poſſible but ſome of them ſhould eſcape us. And yet the Omiſſion of any one Principle breaks the whole Thread, and betrays us into Error. A Man in this Caſe, muſt be clear and capacious, that he may comprehend the whole Set of Principles, and he muſt likewiſe be juſt and ſolid, that from known Principles he may not deduce falſe Concluſions.

EVERY Geometrician would, therefore, be a Man of Buſineſs if he were not too ſhort ſighted; for he ſeldom argues wrong, when he's throughly acquainted with his Principles. And every Man of Buſineſs might be a Geometrician, if he could once turn his Thought to the leſs obvious Principles of Geometry.

THE Reaſon then, why ſome Perſons of Management and Subtlety are not equally qualified to excel in Mathematics, is, becauſe they cannot bend the whole Streſs of their Mind to Principles which lie ſo far out of the Road: and the Reaſon why ſome Perſons admirably ſucceſsful in the Study of the Mathematics, are leſs happy in civil

Buſineſs, is, becauſe they are pur-blind in the Things which lie juſt before them. For theſe latter having been accuſtom'd to Principles which are full and diſtinct, and having never reaſon'd, even from theſe Principles, till they have view'd them a conſiderable Time, and have handled them after their own way, they cannot but loſe themſelves in Matters of political Addreſs. Here, the Principles will not ſubmit to be thus treated and managed: they are not to be diſcern'd without Difficulty; the Mind rather feels, than ſees them; and it would require almoſt an infinite Labour, to work a Perception of them in thoſe, who have it not by their own natural Sagacity. Theſe Things are ſo nice and ſo numerous, that a Man muſt have the cleareſt and fineſt Underſtanding to apprehend them; and, if apprehended, 'tis very ſeldom that they can be ſo regularly demonſtrated, as the Subject of Geometry; becauſe no one can pretend to have ſo firm an hold of their Principles, and neceſſary Foundations, this being a Task next to impoſſible. We muſt ſee them at one immediate View, without the Train and Progreſs of Reaſon; at leaſt, the intuitive Knowledge of them muſt be extended to ſuch a Degree, e'er the Rational can proceed. Thus it rarely happens that either of theſe Genius's can advance any Steps in the

the Province of the other. The Maſters of Geometry ſometimes make themſelves ridiculous, by endeavouring to confine the Subjects of Buſineſs to their own Method, and by retaining the Way of Definitions and Maxims, a Proceſs which this kind of Reaſoning will not bear. Not but that the Mind does the very ſame Thing which they propoſe to do by their Rules: but then the Mind does it ſilently, and naturally, without Art or Shew, and in a Way above the Capacity of moſt Men to conceive, and of all to expreſs.

ON the other Side, the Politic Heads, having been uſed to judge of Things in the Way of Intuition, are ſo amazed when we offer them Problems which they apprehend nothing of, and ſuch as they cannot enter into, but through a Series of Definitions and barren Maxims, that they find them ſoon diſheartned, and inclin'd to give over the Purſuit. But then 'tis certain, between both, that a falſe Genius will neither make a Geometry Profeſſor, nor a Privy Counſellor.

MEN who have a Genius only for Mathematics, will be true and exact in thinking, provided all Things are explain'd to them in their own formal Manner: otherwiſe their Judgment will be erroneous and inſupportable; becauſe they never proceed right, but upon Principles of which they

have a perfect View. Again, those who have a Genius only for Business are seldom patient enough to descend into the first Principles of speculative and abstracted Things, which they have not encountred in Common Life and Action.

* IT is easier to die without the Thought of Death, than to think of Death without the Appehension of Danger,

* IT often happens, that in the Proof of certain Common Rules, we make Use of such Examples as might reciprocally have been proved by the same Rules. Nor is the former Method without its Use: because being ever wont to suppose that the Obscurity lies on the Side of the Thing to be proved, we there discover more Light and Evidence in the Examples. So that if we would illustrate a general Truth, we instance in a particular Case; and if we would decide a particular Case, we begin with the general Truth. We ever fancy somewhat of Doubt and Difficulty in the Subject of the Question, and somewhat clear and convictive in the Medium by which we would evince it. We propose the former under the Notion of its being obscure, and we apply the latter under the Notion of its being perspicuous, and thus assist our Understanding either Way, in gaining its Point.

* We

* WE ordinarily preſume that all Men have the ſame Apprehenſion and Senſe of the ſame Object, when preſented to them: but we preſume thus much, upon a precarious Title, and without real Proof. I know very well that Men apply the ſame Words to the ſame Occaſions; as when two Perſons look on the Snow, both the one and the other expreſſeth the Appearance of this Object by the ſame Term of *White*. From this Conformity of Speech we draw a ſtrong Conjecture for the like Conformity of Idea; which tho' highly probable, yet is not abſolutely demonſtrative.

* ALL our Reaſonings turn at laſt upon a Submiſſion to Senſe. Now our Fancy is like our Senſe in one reſpect, and unlike it in another: like, becauſe it cannot reaſon: and yet unlike, becauſe 'tis falſe and treacherous. And hence it comes to paſs that theſe two Powers, tho' oppoſite to each other, are ſo hard to be diſtinguiſh'd. A Man pretends that my Senſe is Fancy, and that his Fancy is Senſe, and I am even with him, by ſhewing my ſelf the ſame Favour. There is need of a Rule in this Caſe: and Reaſon indeed offers us one, but ſuch as is pliable either way, and ſo leaves us, in effect, without any Rule at all.

* THOSE who judge of any Work by Rule, are in reſpect of others, like a Man who

who has a Watch, when the reſt of the Company have not. One Friend ſays, We have been two Hours together; another affirms it to have been but three quarters of an Hour ſince we met. Here I privately look upon my Watch, and tell one that he's melancholy, and the other that he's merry; becauſe we have been together preciſely an Hour and an half; and I deſpiſe thoſe that tell me, Time paſſeth as I pleaſe to make it, and pretend that I judge of it by my Fancy, not knowing that I judge of it by my Watch.

* THERE are Men in the World who are good Speakers, and ill Writers. The Reaſon of which ſeems to be, that the Place, the Company, *&c.* warms and ripens them, and draws more out of their Genius than it could produce without ſuch an actuating Heat.

* THERE's nothing which does more Miſchief than our unhappy Cuſtom of following the Exception inſtead of the Rule. We ought ſeverely to hold to the Rule, and reſolutely to oppoſe the Exception. And yet becauſe there will be always ſome allowable Exceptions, this Severity ought to be temper'd with Juſtice.

* IT ſeems, in one Senſe, not abſurd to affirm, that the whole World is under a Deluſion. For tho' People's Opinions may really, and, in themſelves be found, yet they are not found in *their* Heads; becauſe they

they generally miſtake, by fancying Truth to be where 'tis not, and by pointing to the wrong Place.

* THOSE who have a Genius for Inventions are but few, thoſe who have none are vaſtly the more numerous, and, by conſequence, the ſtronger Side. And we find the latter commonly making uſe of this Advantage of Number and Strength, in denying the Authors of rare Diſcoveries the Glory which they ſeek, and deſerve by their Labours; who, if in ſpight of Ingratitude, they vigorouſly maintain their Title to Applauſe, and expreſs a Contempt of the unskilful and partial Multitude, all they get by their Obſtinacy is, to be expoſed for Enthuſiaſts and Viſionaries. A Man ought, therefore, to be very cautious of aſſuming to himſelf this Honour, how conſiderable ſoever in Merit, and ought to reſt ſatisfied with the Approbation of thoſe few, who know how to ſet a true Value on him and his Studies.

* THE Underſtanding naturally believes, and the Will naturally loves; ſo that if either of them be not directed to true Objects, it muſt neceſſarily take up with falſe.

* MANY things which are true, have been contradicted; many which are falſe, paſs without Contradiction. To be contradicted, is no more a Mark of Falſhood, than not to be contradicted, is a Mark of Truth.

* *CÆSAR*

* *CÆSAR* was too old, in my Opinion, to amuſe himſelf with projecting the Conqueſt of the World. Such an Imagination was excuſable in *Alexander*, a Prince full of Youth and Fire, and not eaſy to be check'd in his Hopes. But *Cæſar* ought to have been more grave.

* ALL the World ſees that Men venture for Uncertainties; in Voyages, in War, *&c.* But all the World does not ſee the particular Rule by which Men proceed, and which demonſtrates that they ought thus to venture. *Montaign* knew it to be true in fact, that Men have a natural Diſguſt for formal Fools; and that Cuſtom governs all things; but he could not have given a Reaſon for either of theſe Truths. Thoſe who ſee not the Cauſes of things, but the bare Effects, are, in regard to thoſe who ſee the Cauſes, like thoſe who have Eyes in regard to thoſe that have none. For Effects are, in a manner, the Objects of outward Senſe; but Cauſes are diſcernible only by the Underſtanding. And tho' 'tis the Underſtanding likewiſe which takes Cognizance of Effects, yet this Act of the Underſtanding bears no more Proportion to that nobler Act which diſtinguiſhes the Cauſes, than the bodily Eye to the Eye of the Mind.

* THE Senſe we have of the Falſeneſs of thoſe Pleaſures which are preſent, and the Igno-

Ignorance we are under as to the Vanity of thoſe Pleaſures which are abſent, are the two great Sources of all our Levity and Inconſtancy.

* IF we dream'd the ſame thing every Night, it might perhaps affect us no leſs than the Objects which we encounter by Day. And if an Artiſan ſhould be ſure of dreaming as often as he went to Bed that he was a King, I think he would be as happy as a King who ſhould dream conſtantly, for the ſame ſpace, that he was an Artiſan. Should we every Night dream that we were purſued by our Enemies, ſo as continually to lie under the Fright of theſe troubleſome Phantoms, or that we were engaged in a Succeſſion of Labour, as in Travelling, or the like; we ſhould ſuffer almoſt as much, as if the things were real; and ſhould be as much afraid of ſleeping, as we are now afraid of being awake, when we apprehend our ſelves to be entering upon theſe Misfortunes or Difficulties. And the Conſequence of the Reality could ſcarce be more fatal, than that of the Imagination. But becauſe our Dreams are ever varying from themſelves, what they preſent us with ſtrikes us more faintly than what we behold with open Eyes, which is for the moſt part uniform, equal, and conſiſtent. Not but that this latter way has alſo its Changes, tho' not with ſuch Frequency, or

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ſo great Abruptneſs, but in the manner of an eaſy Journey. And hence came the Phraſe of our being *in a Dream*: for Life is indeed but a Dream, tho' of a leſs inconſtant and irregular kind.

* KINGS and Princes ſometimes retire for their Diverſion. To be always on the Throne would be a wearisome Slavery. Greatneſs muſt upon Occaſion be abſtain'd from, to preſerve and refreſh the Taſte of it.

* 'TIS ſurprizing to conſider there are Men in the World, who, having bid defiance to all the Laws of GOD and Nature, do yet conſtitute Laws amongſt themſelves, to which they pay the exacteſt Obedience: as for inſtance, Thieves, *&c.*

* THOSE mighty Efforts and Sallies to which the Mind ſometimes attains, are things which it cannot keep Poſſeſſion of: It wins them by a vigorous Flight, and loſeth them by as ſudden a Fall.

* PROVIDED we know the ruling Paſſion in any Man, we aſſure our ſelves of being able to pleaſe him. And yet every Man has his peculiar Fancy and Humour, contrary to his real Good, even in the Idea which he forms of Good: and this Diverſity breaks and diſconcerts the Meaſures of thoſe who are ſtudious of winning upon the Affections of others.

* BY the means which we corrupt our Judgment, by the ſame we corrupt our Senſe. Now both our Senſe and Judgment are chiefly form'd upon Converſation: ſo that good or ill Company may make or mar them. It is therefore of the greateſt Importance to chooſe our Company well; that we may confirm, and not debauch our Powers: and yet 'tis hardly poſſible to make this good Choice, unleſs they are already confirm'd and not debauch'd. Thus the whole matter runs in a Circle, which, without a very particular Happineſs, we ſhall never get out of.

* WE naturally ſuppoſe our ſelves more capable of diving to the Center of Things, than of embracing the Circumference. The viſible Extent of the World plainly ſurpaſſeth us and our Faculties. But becauſe we our ſelves do likewiſe ſurpaſs, with a great Diſproportion, the minuter parts of Nature, we fancy that theſe muſt neceſſarily fall under the Command of our Mind. And yet it requires the ſame (that is, an infinite) Perfection and Capacity to deſcend to Nothing, as to extend to All. And I am perſwaded that if a Man could penetrate into the firſt Elements of things, he might, by the ſame Strength, arrive at the Comprehenſion of Infinity. Each Labour depends on the other; each conducts to the other. Theſe vaſt Extremities, the farther they reach, the

more ſurely they meet and touch, reuniting, at length, in GOD, and in GOD alone.

* IF a Man did but begin with the Study of himſelf, he would ſoon find how incapable he was of proceeding farther. For what Poſſibility is there, that the Part ſhould contain the whole? It ſeems, however, more reaſonable that we ſhould at leaſt aſpire to the Knowledge of the other Parts; to which we bear ſome Proportion and Reſemblance. But then the Parts of the World are ſo nicely interwoven, ſo exquiſitely link'd and encaſed one within the other, that I look upon it as impoſſible to underſtand one without another, or even, without All.

To inſtance in our ſelves. Man has really ſome Dependence on every thing that he knows. He has need of Place, to contain him; of Time, to lengthen out his Duration; of Elements, to compoſe his Frame; of Motion, to preſerve his Life; of Heat and Food, for Nouriſhment; of Air, for Reſpiration. He ſees the Light which ſhines upon him, he feels the Bodies which encircle him; in ſhort, he contracts an Alliance with the whole World.

IN order therefore to an exact Knowledge of Man, we muſt know whence it comes to paſs, that Air, for Example, ſhould be neceſſary for his Subſiſtence: and to apprehend the Nature of Air, we ſhould know

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by what particular means it has ſuch an Influence on the Life of Man.

AGAIN, Flame cannot ſubſiſt without Air: therefore the Philoſophy of the one depends on that of the other.

ALL things then being in different Regards, Effects and Cauſes, Dependents and Aſſiſtants, near and remote, holding Communication with each other by a natural, tho' imperceptible Line, which unites the moſt diſtant in Place, and moſt repugnant in kind; I ſee no Poſſibility either of knowing the Parts without the whole, or of knowing the whole, without a diſtinct Apprehenſion of the Parts.

AND what ſeems to fix and complete our utter Inability for the Knowledge of things, is, that they are All in their own Nature ſimple, whereas *we* are compoſed of two oppoſite Natures, Spirit and Body. For 'tis impoſſible that our reaſoning Part ſhould be other than ſpiritual. And as for the Extravagance of thoſe who will allow themſelves to conſiſt of nothing but Body, this excludes them ſtill more forcibly from all Acquaintance with the Objects about them, it being a moſt unconceivable Paradox to affirm, that Matter is capable of Reflexion or Thought.

'TIS this Compoſition of Body and Spirit which has made the Philoſophers, almoſt

univerſally, confound the Ideas of things; aſcribing to Body the Properties of Spirit, and to Spirit the Affections of Body. Thus they tell us, with good Aſſurance, that Bodies have a Tendency downwards; that they aſpire to their proper Center; that they ſhun their own Deſtruction; that they avoid a *Vacuum*; that they have their peculiar Inclinations, Sympathies and Antipathies: all which belong purely to Spirit. But on the other hand, if Spirits are the Subject of their Diſcourſe, they conſider theſe as circumſcribed in Place; as endued with local Motion, *&c.* which ought, in juſtice, to be applied to Body only.

INSTEAD of receiving into our Mind the true and genuine Ideas of things, we ſtrike a Tincture of our own compound Being on all the ſimple Objects which we contemplate.

WHILE we make no Scruple to compoſe the whole World of Spirit and Body, might it not ſeem natural to infer, that we really apprehend this Compoſition? And yet this is what, of all things, we are moſt at a Loſs to apprehend. Every Man is to himſelf the moſt prodigious Object in the Extent of Nature: for as he knows little of Body, and leſs of Spirit, ſo he knows leaſt of all, how Body ſhould be united to Spirit. This is the very Complication of all his Difficulties: and yet this is no other than his own proper Being.

Modus

Modus quo Corporibus adhæret Spiritus comprehendi ab hominibus non potest: & hoc tamen homo est.

* IN natural things, (the Knowledge of which is not neceſſary to us) ſince there are many which exceed our Diſcovery, it may perhaps be not amiſs that there ſhould be ſome univerſal Error, to bound and fix the Purſuits of Men. Such, for inſtance, as the vulgar Opinion concerning the Moon, which aſcribes to her the Change of Seaſons, and the Progreſs of Diſtempers. For it ſeems, to be one of the principal Infelicities of Mankind, to entertain a reſtleſs Curioſity for things which 'tis impoſſible they ſhould underſtand. And I queſtion whether it would not be a leſs Evil, with regard to things of this kind, to lie under an invincible Miſtake, than to indulge an unprofitable Enquiry.

* THIS Dog's *mine*, ſays the poor Child: this is *my* Place, in the Sun. From ſo petty a Beginning, may we trace the Tyranny and Uſurpation of the whole Earth.

* THE Judgment and Underſtanding have their proper Method: which is by Principles and Demonſtrations. The Heart and Affections have a Method altogether different. A Man would expoſe himſelf very remarkably, who ſhould go about to engage our Love, by laying down, in a philoſophical Order, the Springs and Cauſes of that Paſſion.

OUR Bleſſed *Lord*, and St. *Paul*, have oftner uſed the Method of the Heart, which is that of *Charity*, than the other of Reaſon and Judgment: becauſe the principal Deſign of their Diſcourſes was not ſo much to inform as to excite and inflame. St. *Auſtin* takes the ſame way: which chiefly conſiſts in ſuch lively Digreſſions upon every Point, as may illuſtrate the main End, and keep it ever in view.

* THE common Idea which we form of *Plato* or *Ariſtotle* repreſents them in their Garb of Profeſſors, and as Perſons of compoſed Seriouſneſs, and immoveable Gravity. Whereas they were really honeſt Gentlemen who could laugh and jeſt with a Friend, as well as our ſelves. And 'twas in this Vein of Mirth and Humour that they fram'd their Laws, and Syſtems of Polity. The Time they ſpent upon theſe Projects was the moſt unphiloſophical Part of their whole Life. When they pleaſed to be Philoſophers in earneſt, they had no other Care, or Thought, than how to live with Privacy and Tranquility.

* THERE are ſome Writers who always love to put a Mask upon the Face of Nature. There's no ſuch Perſon with them as a *King*, but, a *Grand*, or *Auguſt*, *Monarch*; no ſuch Place as *Paris*, but, *the Metropolis and Capital of a mighty Kingdom*.

* WHEN

* WHEN in peruſing a Piece we find ſome Words often repeated, yet ſuch as we cannot change for others without a manifeſt Diſadvantage, we ought by all Means to let them ſtand. For this is a true Mark of their Propriety; and 'twas only our Envy that made us Critics; which was ſo blind as not to ſee that the Repetition was elegant on this Occaſion, there being no general Rule in the Caſe.

* THOSE who bring in forced Words, to preſerve the Antitheſis, are like thoſe who make falſe Windows to preſerve the Symmetry. Their Rule is, not to ſpeak good Senſe, but good Point, and Turn.

* THERE is a firſt Model of Agreeableneſs and Beauty, which conſiſts in a certain Relation between our own Nature, ſuch as it is, whether weak or ſtrong, and the thing with which we are affected. Whatever is form'd upon this Model takes and delights us: 'tis all the ſame in Building, in Singing, in Speaking, in Verſe, in Proſe, in Women, in Birds, in Rivers, in Trees, in Chambers, in Dreſſes. Whatever differs from this Model, is always diſpleaſing to Perſons of a true Reliſh and Diſcernment.

* AS we talk of Beauties in Poetry, ſo we ought to talk of Beauties in Geometry, and Beauties in Phyſick; and yet we never uſe theſe Phraſes. The Reaſon of which is,

becauſe we have an adequate Idea of the Objects of Geometry and Phyſick; but we underſtand not wherein that Agreeableneſs conſiſts which makes the Object of Poetry. We are at a Loſs to know the real Model and Standard of Nature, which ought to meaſure ſuch Compoſitions: and for want of this Knowledge, we invent a Sett of extravagant Metaphors, ſuch as *the Golden Age, the Wonder of our Times, the Fatal Laurel, the Lovely Star,* &c. and we ſtamp this Jargon with the Name of Poetical Beauties. But now if we were to imagine a Woman dreſs'd by the ſame Pattern, we ſhould have a certain airy Damſel bedeck'd with Plates of Looking-Glaſs and Tinſel Chains. And a Nymph thus attired would be much fitter to engage our Laughter than our Love. Becauſe we better apprehend what's juſt and decent in the Habit of a Woman, than in the Ornaments of a Poem. But they who had not the like Gift of Diſcernment, might ſtill admire the Lady in this antick Equipage, and many a Village of good Note would infallibly worſhip her for the Queen. Whence ſome Perſons of Wit have ſtil'd the Sonnets and Stanzas compoſed after this fantaſtical manner, *the Queens of the May.*

* WHEN a juſt and natural Diſcourſe points out ſome particular Paſſion, or Effect, we feel in our Breaſts the Truth of what we

read, (becauſe 'twas really there before, tho' without our Notice) and we find our ſelves diſpoſed to love the Perſon who has cauſed us thus to feel it, for he ſeems to have given us a Specimen not of his Goods, but of our own; and this Civility entitles him to our Affection: beſides that ſuch an Affinity and Reſemblance of Thought fails not to beget a Kindneſs and Endearment of Soul.

* ALL true Eloquence muſt be compoſed of what is agreeable, and what is real: but then, even the agreeable part ought, in its kind, to be likewiſe real.

ORDINARY Judges, when in reading they meet with a natural and proper Stile, are quite aſtoniſhed, becauſe they look'd for an *Author*, and they find a *Man*. But thoſe who have the Happineſs of a true Taſte are no leſs ſurpriz'd, when, looking for a *Man*, they find an *Author*. *Plus Poeticè quam humanè locutus eſt*. We are very large in our Compliments to Nature, if we pretend that ſhe is able to ſpeak of all Subjects, and even of Divinity.

* IN Compoſitions we ought never to draw off the Mind from one thing to another, unleſs it be purely for the ſake of Refreſhment, and then it muſt be at ſuch time when Refreſhment is exactly proper, and ſeaſonable, and at no other. For he that goes about to divert his Reader without

Occaſion, does but weary and diſguſt him. Men are too nice and faſtidious to bear an unneceſſary Officiouſneſs, ſo hard it is to obtain any thing from them but upon the Fund of Pleaſure: a Coin which fails not to purchaſe all that this World affords.

* MANKIND have indeed a natural Love for Bitterneſs and Severity: yet for ſuch, as is by no means exerciſed againſt thoſe who are afflicted with ill Fortune, but againſt thoſe who are proud and inſolent under good: and we ſhall find our ſelves in a Miſtake, if we paſs any other Judgment on this matter.

* *MARTIAL*'s Epigram upon the poor One-ey'd Men, is e'en good for nothing, becauſe it affords not the leaſt Conſolation, nor ſerves for any other uſe than to give an Edge to the Vain-glory of the Author: But an Author can never be of Value, when he propoſeth himſelf as the ſole End of his Writing. *Ambitioſa recidet Ornamenta.* We ſhould ſtudy to pleaſe thoſe who have a Senſe of Tenderneſs and Compaſſion, not thoſe who are barbarous and inhuman.

A

PRAYER

OF

Monſieur *PASCAL*,

Compoſed in

SICKNESS.

I.

O LORD, whoſe Spirit is ſo Good and Gracious in all Things, and who art ſo infinitely Merciful; that not the Proſperities alone, but even the Diſtreſſes which happen to thy Choſen, are the Effects of thy Mercy: grant that I may not bring a Pagan Mind to my preſent Afflictions; but that, like a true Chriſtian, I may in all Events acknowledge thy Juſtice, and thy Providence. For the altering of my Condition, can no way affect or influence thine. Thou art ever immutable, tho'

I am ever ſubject to change: Thou art the ſame GOD, no leſs in afflicting and puniſhing, than in the midſt of thy Indulgences, and plentiful Conſolations.

II.

THOU gaveſt me Health to be ſpent in ſerving thee; and I perverted it to a Uſe altogether profane. Now thou haſt ſent a Sickneſs for my Correction: O ſuffer me not to uſe this likewiſe, as a Means of provoking thee by my Impatience. I abuſed thy Gift of Health; and thou haſt juſtly puniſhed me for my Neglect: O keep me from abuſing thy very Puniſhment. And becauſe the Corruption of my Nature is ſuch, that it renders thy Favours pernicious to me; grant, O GOD, that thy all-powerful Grace may render thy Chaſtiſements wholſome and beneficial. If I had a Heart fill'd with Affection for the World, while I enjoy'd any Degree of Strength and Vigour, deſtroy that Vigour for my Soul's Health; and, whether by weakening my Body, or by inflaming and exalting my Charity, render me incapable of delighting in the World, that my Delight may be only in thy Name.

III.

III.

O GOD, before whom I ſhall be obliged to give an exact Account of my Actions at the End of my Life, and the End of the World: O God, who permitteſt the World, and all Things in it, to ſubſiſt, only for the Probation of the Good, and for the Puniſhment of the Wicked: O God, who leaveſt harden'd Sinners to enjoy the World, with a delicious, but criminal Uſe: O God, who appointeſt our Body to die, and who, at the Hour of Death, removeſt our Soul from all that it doated upon here; O God, who at the laſt Moment of my Life wilt forcibly ſeparate me from all Things that have engaged my Thoughts, and taken up my Heart; O God, who wilt conſume the Heavens and the Earth, at the laſt Day, and all the Creatures they contain, to convince Men, that nothing ſubſiſts but by thy Hand, and that nothing beſides thee deſerves our Love; becauſe, beſides thee nothing is fixed and permanent: O God, who wilt deſtroy all theſe vain Idols, all theſe fatal Objects of our Affections; I praiſe thee, O God, and I will bleſs thee while I have my Being; for that thou haſt been pleas'd, of thy Favour towards me, already to anticipate the dreadful Day, by already deſtroying all Things to my

Taſte

Taſte and Thought, under this Weakneſs which I ſuffer from thy Providence. I praiſe thee, that thou haſt given me this Divorce from the Sweetneſs of Health, and from the Pleaſures of the World; and that thou haſt, for my Advantage, in ſome ſort conſumed theſe vain Idols, which thou wilt effectually conſume, for the Confuſion of the Wicked, in the Day of thy Wrath. Grant, O Lord, that I may judge my ſelf after this ſeeming Deſtruction, which thou haſt made in my behalf; ſo that after the final Deſtruction which thou wilt make of my Life, and of the World, I may eſcape when judged by thee. I know, O Lord, that at the Inſtant of my Death, I ſhall find my ſelf entirely ſeparated from the World, ſtripped naked of all Things, ſtanding alone before thee, to anſwer to thy Juſtice concerning all the Motions of my Thoughts and Spirit: grant that I may look on my ſelf as dead already, ſeparated from the World, ſtripp'd of all the Objects of my Paſſion, placed alone in thy Preſence, to implore thy Mercy for the Converſion of my Heart; and that I may gather hence Matter of exceeding Comfort, that thou ſhouldſt be pleaſed firſt to ſend this Image and Appearance of Death, as the Subject of thy Mercy, before thou ſendeſt a real Diſſolution, to exerciſe thy Juſtice. As thou ſeemeſt to have prevented the Time of my Death,

ſo

ſo let me prevent the Rigour of thy Sentence; and let me ſo examine my ſelf before thy Judgment, that in thy Judgment I may find Mercy.

IV.

GRANT, O Lord, that I may, with an obedient Silence, adore the Methods of thy Divine Wiſdom, in the Diſpoſals of my Life, that thy Rod may comfort me; and that having lived in the Bitterneſs of my Sins, while I enjoy'd the good Things of my peaceable Condition, I may taſte the heavenly Sweetneſs of thy Grace, during theſe ſalutary Evils with which thou haſt afflicted me. But I am ſenſible, O my GOD, that my Heart is ſo harden'd, ſo full of worldly Ideas, Engagements, Solicitudes and Diſquiets, that neither Health, nor Sickneſs, nor Diſcourſes, nor Books, (not even thy ſacred Word and Goſpel) nor thy moſt holy Myſteries, nor Alms, nor Faſtings, nor Mortifications, nor Miracles, nor the Uſe of thy Sacraments, nor the Sacrifice of thy precious Body, nor all my Endeavours, nor the Endeavours of the whole World together, can effect any Thing toward the Beginnings of my Converſion, if thou bleſſeſt not all theſe Means, with the extraordinary Succours of thy Grace. I addreſs

unto

unto thee, Almighty Lord, to intreat from thy Bounty a Gift, which the joint Concurrence of created Things can never procure or beſtow. I ſhould not have the Boldneſs to direct my Cries to thee, were there beſides, any that could hear, and could relieve them. But, O my GOD, ſince the Converſion, which I now beg of thy Grace, is a Work exceeding all the Powers of Nature, to whom can I apply, but to the Almighty Maſter of my Heart, and of Nature it ſelf? To whom, O Lord, ſhould I cry; to whom ſhould I flee for Succour unleſs unto thee? Nothing that is not GOD can fix my Confidence, or fill my Deſires. 'Tis GOD alone whom I ask and ſeek: 'tis thou alone, O my GOD, whom I implore, for the obtaining of thy ſelf. O Lord, open my Heart: enter this rebellious Place, poſſeſs'd by my Vices and my Sins. They at preſent hold it in Subjection: do thou enter, as into the *ſtrong Man's Houſe*; but firſt bind the ſtrong and powerful Enemy, who is Maſter of it; and then ſpoil it of the Treaſures which it now conceals. Reſcue and retrieve my Affections which the World has robbed me of: ſpoil thou the World of this Treaſure; or rather reſume it as thy own; for to thee it is but a juſt Tribute, becauſe thy own Image is ſtamp'd upon it. The Treaſure was of thy forming, at the Moment of my Bap-

Baptiſm, my ſecond Birth; but it is wholly impair'd and defaced: the Image of the World is graven ſo ſtrongly on it, that thine is no more diſcernible there. Thou alone waſt able at firſt to create my Soul; thou alone art able to create it a-new. Thou alone couldſt imprint on it thy Image; thou alone canſt revive and refreſh that defaced Image; even *JESUS CHRIST*, the expreſs Image of thy Subſtance.

V.

O My God, how happy is the Soul which can love ſo charming an Object; where the Affection is ſo Honourable, the Alliance ſo full of Benefit and Safety! I perceive I cannot be enamour'd of the World, without incurring thy Diſpleaſure, without prejudicing, and even degrading my ſelf; and yet the World is ſtill the Mark of my Deſire. O my God, how happy are the Souls which have fix'd their Deſire on thee; becauſe this is an Affection to which they may give themſelves wholly up, not only without Scruple, but with Commendation! How firm and laſting is their Happineſs, whoſe Expectation can never be defeated; becauſe thou faileſt not, and becauſe neither Life nor Death can ſeparate them from this Divine Object of Delight!

light! For the ſame Moment which ſhall involve the Wicked, together with their Idols, in a common Ruin, ſhall unite the Juſt to thee in a common Glory; while as the former periſh with the periſhing Objects to which they had enſnared their Affections; the latter ſubſiſt eternally, in that eternal and ſelf-ſubſiſting Object to which they were ſo familiarly allied. O the Happineſs of thoſe, who with an abſolute Choice and Preference, and with an invincible Bent of Inclination, are able to love perfectly and freely, what they are engaged to love, out of Duty and Neceſſity!

VI.

PErfect, O my GOD, the good Motions thou haſt wrought in me. Be thou their End, as thou art their Beginning. Crown thy own Gifts; for thy Gifts I acknowledge them to be. I acknowledge them, O GOD, and am ſo far from preſuming on any ſuch Merit in my Prayers as ſhould oblige thee to a neceſſary Grant, that I likewiſe moſt humbly acknowledge, that having given up to the Creatures this Heart which thou formedſt purely for thy own Service, not for the World, nor for my ſelf, I can expect no means of Favour but from thy Mercy; becauſe I have nothing in me that can en-

gage thy Aſſiſtance; and becauſe all the natural Movements of my Heart, being directed either towards the Creatures, or towards my ſelf, can have no Force with regard to thee, but that of incenſing and provoking thee. I thank thee, therefore, O my GOD, for the good Motions thou haſt inſpired; and for this amongſt the reſt, the Grace of thanking thee for them.

VII.

STrike my Heart with true Repentance for my Faults; becauſe without this Pain and Grief of Mind, the Evils with which thou haſt ſtricken my Body, will only procure to me a new Occaſion of Sin. Make me rightly to underſtand that the Evils of the Body are nothing elſe but the Puniſhment, and at the ſame Time, the Figure and Reſemblance of thoſe which happen to the Soul: But, O Lord, make them prove likewiſe their Remedy, by making me conſider, in the bodily Pains I feel, thoſe in my Soul, which I feel not; though my Soul, as well as Body is overſpread with Sickneſs and Sores. For my greateſt Evil of Soul is this Inſenſibility, and this extreme Weakneſs, which diſables it from all Apprehenſion of its own Miſeries. Give me a lively Senſe of theſe Miſeries, my paſt

Offences; and grant that the reſidue of my Life may be one continued Penitence, to waſh away their Stain.

VIII.

O Lord, although my Life has been hitherto free from more grievous Crimes (the Occaſions of which thou haſt been pleas'd in Mercy, to remove) yet it muſt needs have been exceedingly hateful to thee, by reaſon of my habitual Neglect, my Abuſe of thy moſt holy Sacrament, my Contempt of thy Word and Inſpirations, by the Idleneſs and Unprofitableneſs of all my Actions and Thoughts, and by the entire Loſs of all that Time which thou haſt given me, for no other Employment but of worſhiping thee, of ſeeking in all my Buſineſs and Applications the Means of doing thy Pleaſure, and of becoming truly penitent for my daily Treſpaſſes, ſuch as are common, even to good Men, and therefore ſuch as require that their whole Life ſhould be one Act of Repentance, without which they are in danger of falling from their Goodneſs.

IX.

HItherto, O Lord, I have ever been deaf to thy Inſpirations, I have deſpiſed thy Oracles; I have judged contrary to

to what thou judgeſt: I have croſſed thoſe holy Maxims, which thou broughteſt into the World from the Boſom of the eternal Father, and according to which thou wilt judge the World at thy ſecond Coming. Thou haſt ſaid, *Bleſſed are thoſe that mourn*, and *woe unto* thoſe who *have receiv'd* their *Conſolation*. My Language was directly oppoſite: Woe unto thoſe that mourn, Happy thoſe who abound in Conſolations and Enjoyments: thoſe who poſſeſs a plentiful Fortune, a glorious Name, an uninterrupted Health, and unbroken Vigour. And for what Reaſon could I make theſe Advantages the Standards of Happineſs, but becauſe they furniſh'd their Owners with a more large Capacity of enjoying the Creatures: that is, of offending thee. Thus for Health in particular, I confeſs, O Lord, that I eſteem'd it a Good, not becauſe it ſupplied more eaſy Means of profiting in a Courſe of Holineſs, of exhauſting more Cares and more Watchings in thy Service, or in the Aſſiſtance of my Neighbours; but becauſe under its Protection I might abandon my ſelf, with leſs Reſtraint, to the Delicacies of Life, and receive a quicker Reliſh of pernicious and fatal Pleaſures. Grant, O Lord, that I may reform my corrupted Reaſon, and rectify my Sentiments by thine: that I may judge my ſelf Happy in Afflicti-

ons, and that under this my Diſability as to external Actions, thou mayſt ſo purify my Thoughts and Intention, as to reconcile them to thy own; that I may thus find thee within my ſelf, while my Weakneſs incapacitates me from ſeeking thee without. For, O Lord, thy Kingdom is in the Hearts of the Faithful; nor ſhall my Heart be debarr'd from perceiving and enjoying it in it ſelf, if it may be firſt repleniſh'd with thy Spirit, and with thy Wiſdom.

X.

BUT, O Lord, by what Means ſhall I engage thee to pour down thy Spirit upon this miſerable Soul? All that I have, all that I am, is odious to thee; nor can I diſcover in my ſelf the leaſt Foundation of Union and Agreement. I ſee nothing, O Lord, but my Sufferings, which have a Reſemblance with thine. Look therefore on the Evils I now labour under, and thoſe which threaten me with their Approach. Behold with an Eye of Pity, the Wounds which thy Hand has made. O my Saviour, who lovedſt thy own Sufferings, even to Death: O GOD, who for no other Cauſe becameſt Man, but that thou might'ſt ſuffer more than mere Man could undergo for human Salvation: O GOD, who waſt there-

therefore Incarnate ſince the Fall of Man by Sin, and didſt therefore aſſume our Body, that thou might'ſt feel all the Evils which Sin had deſerv'd: O GOD, who ſo loveſt Bodies exercis'd with Sufferings, as to have choſen for thy ſelf a Body loaded with the moſt grievous Sufferings this World can exhibit: be pleas'd favourably to accept of my Body, not for its own ſake, nor for all that it contains; for all deſerves thy Wrath; but on account of the Evils it endures, which alone can deſerve thy Love. May my Sufferings be pleaſing to thee, and my Afflictions invite thee to viſit me. But to compleat the Preparation for thy Reception and Stay, Grant, O my Saviour, that as my Body has this in common with thine to ſuffer for Sin, ſo my Mind may have this likewiſe in common with thy Mind, to be ſorrowful for Sin: and that thus I may ſuffer with thee and like thee, both in my Body and in my Mind, for my numberleſs Tranſgreſſions.

XI.

GRant me, O Lord, the Grace of joining thy Conſolations to my Sufferings, that I may ſuffer like a *Chriſtian*. I pray not to be exempted from Pain; for this is the glorious Recompence of Saints: but I pray

pray that I may not be abandon'd to the Pains of Nature without the Comforts of thy Spirit; for this is the Curſe of Jews and Pagans. I pray not to enjoy a perfect Fulneſs of Comfort, without any Allay of Sufferings; for that is the noble Prerogative of a Life of Glory: neither pray I for a perfect Fulneſs of Sufferings without any Mixture of Comfort; for that's a State of Jewiſh Darkneſs and Miſery. But I pray, O Lord, that I may feel at once, both the Pains of Nature for my Sins, and the Conſolations of Grace by thy Spirit; for that's the true State of Chriſtianity. O, may I never feel Pain without Comfort! but may I ſo feel them together, as at length to feel thy Comforts only without my Pains! for ſo, O Lord, thou didſt leave the whole World to languiſh under natural Sufferings, 'till the Coming of thy Son: but now thou comforteſt and ſweeteneſt the Sufferings of thy Servants by his Grace, and filleſt thy Saints with pure Beatitudes in his Glory. Theſe are the three wonderful Steps by which thou haſt been pleas'd to guide and exalt the Works of thy Providence: Thou haſt rais'd me from the firſt; O, conduct me to the ſecond; that I may attain the third! Thy Grace, O Lord, is ſufficient for me.

XII.

XII.

SUffer me not, O Lord, to continue under ſuch an Eſtrangement from thee, as to be able to reflect on thy Soul, which was ſorrowful, even to Death; thy Body which was oppreſs'd and overcome by Death, for my Sins; without rejoicing if I may be counted worthy to ſuffer in my Body, and in my Soul. For what can be more ſhameful, and yet what is more uſual with Chriſtians, and even with my ſelf, than while thou in thy Agony, didſt ſweat Drops of Blood, for the Expiation of our Offences, we make it our whole Study to live in Delicacy and Eaſe? that *Chriſtians*, who profeſs a Dependence on thee; that thoſe who, at their Baptiſm renounc'd the World to become thy Followers; that thoſe who in the Face of the Church have engaged themſelves by a ſolemn Oath to live and die in thy Service; that thoſe who pretend a Belief, that the World perſecuted and crucified thee, that thoſe who acknowledge thee to have been expoſed to the Wrath of GOD, and to the Cruelty of Men, to purchaſe their Redemption; that thoſe who make a daily Confeſſion of All this; who conſider thy Body as the Sacrifice which was offer'd for their Salvation; who look on the Pleaſures

and

and Sins of the World as the only Cauſe of thy Sufferings, and the World it ſelf as thy Murtherer; ſhould yet ſeek to gratify their Bodies with the ſame Pleaſures and Sins in the ſame World; and that thoſe who could not without Horror behold a Perſon careſſing the Murtherer of his Father, by whoſe voluntary Death the Son is ranſom'd and lives, ſhould be able to find Delight and Complacency, as I have done, in the World, which I know to be the Murtherer of Him, whom I own for my Father and my GOD, who was delivered for my Releaſement and Safety, and who in his own Perſon ſuſtain'd the Puniſhment due to my Sins? It was moſt juſt, O Lord, that thou ſhouldſt interrupt ſo criminal a Joy, as this with which I ſolaced my ſelf under the very Shadow of Death.

XIII.

TAke from me, O Lord, that Sorrow which the Love of my ſelf may raiſe in me from my Sufferings, and from my unſucceſsful Hopes and Deſigns in this World, while inſenſible and regardleſs of thy Glory. Create in me a Sorrow reſembling thy own. Let my Pains be, in ſome meaſure, ſerviceable towards the appeaſing of thy Wrath: let them prove the happy Occaſion of my Converſion

verſion and my Salvation. Let me not hereafter wiſh for Health or Life, but with the Proſpect of ſpending both in thee, with thee, and for thee. I pray not that thou wouldſt give me either Health or Sickneſs, Life or Death; but that thou wouldſt diſpoſe of my Health, my Sickneſs, my Life, and my Death, for thy Glory, and for my own eternal Welfare, for the Uſe of the Church, and the Benefit of thy faithful Servants, into the Number of whom I hope to be admitted by thy Grace. Thou alone knoweſt what is expedient for me; thou art my Sovereign Maſter and Lord: guide and govern me, at thy Pleaſure. Give me, or take from me, as ſhall ſeem beſt to thy Providence; but in all things conform my Will to thine; and grant that with an humble and perfect Submiſſion, and a holy Confidence, I may diſpoſe my ſelf to receive the Orders of thy eternal Wiſdom; and may equally reverence and adore the moſt different Events which thou ſhalt pleaſe to accompliſh in me.

XIV.

LET me with a conſtant Evenneſs and Uniformity of Spirit, embrace all thy Diſpoſals: for as much as we know not what we ought to ask, and cannot wiſh one

Event rather than another without Preſumption; and without making our ſelves the Judges and the Sponſors of that Train of future things which thy Wiſdom has ſo juſtly conceal'd from our View. I know, O Lord, my whole Knowledge may be reduced to this one Point, that 'tis good to obey thee, and evil to offend thee. After this, I know not what is the beſt, or the worſt, amongſt all things. I know not which is more profitable for me, Health or Sickneſs, Riches or Poverty; any Condition, any Circumſtances of this World. For ſuch a Judgment ſurpaſſeth the Force and Sagacity of Men, and lies hidden amongſt the Secrets of thy Providence, which I reverence and adore, but will never attempt to trace or penetrate.

XV.

GRant, O Lord, that in every Condition, I may conform my ſelf to thy Will; and in my preſent Sickneſs glorify thee by my Pains. Without theſe 'tis impoſſible I ſhould attain to thy Glory, ſince thou thy ſelf was not *made Perfect*, but *thro' Sufferings*. It was by the Marks of thy Sufferings that thou waſt known to thy Diſciples: And it is by their Sufferings that thou knoweſt who are thy Diſciples.